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Humphrey Carpenter

"This is Ole Ezra Speaking!"

Ezra Pound's Wartime Broadcasts from Rome

On 3 September 1939, two and a half months after Ezra Pound returned from New York to Rapallo, Britain and France declared war on Germany. Although the Rome-Berlin Axis has been formed in 1936 and there had been a full military and political alliance between Mussolini and Hitler since May 1939, Italy remained out of the conflict for the time being. Ezra's circle of acquaintances in Rapallo and Venice, mostly elderly expatriates, took refuge in the belief that the country did not want war at all. They pointed out that recent fortification operations along the Brenner Pass between Italy and Austria indicated that "Mussolini's heart was in the right place".

Ezra carried on as if nothing out of the ordinary were happening. A letter to a Social Credit supporter in England on 2 September, the day after the German invasion of Poland, asked him to check the proofs of the next section of Cantos "if for any reason postal communications are interrupted"; but another letter written the same day, to an American who wanted to start a new magazine, entirely ignored the European situation. . . .

Ezra had begun to contribute to the Fascist-dominated periodical *Meridiano di Roma*, and in November 1939 wrote to its editor Cornelio di Marzio, suggesting that the Italian Government should establish, presumably under his own supervision or at least with his participation, a series of publications in English that would make American readers understand and sympathise with Fascism as it actually existed in Italy. There should, he said, be studies of great American politicians of the past, whose ideas could be compared with Fascism; also a periodical devoted partly to Italian and partly to American ideas and culture, and a weekly summary of articles that had been published in Italian daily papers. Di Marzio recommended Ezra to contact the Institute for Overseas Cultural Relations. In December 1939, a note from Ezra reached Luigi Villari, in charge of relations with the USA, who rejected the plan on the grounds that it would be a tactless intervention in American domestic affairs at a time when there were no hostilities between the two countries. Villari had a shrewd idea of whom he was dealing with. In an internal memorandum he wrote:

> "Mr Pound . . . is a gifted and cultured man with excellent impulses towards us, but is a dreamer who also wants to be involved in economic and financial matters about which he has some pretty fantastic notions. In the United States, Pound is appreciated as a poet, but as a political and economic writer he is not taken seriously, so that an initiative originating from him would not carry much weight."

We return to *the problems of the life and career of Ezra Pound. The last time we took up the subject it caused an international controversy about the "Cantos"—and whether Pound had actually confessed to Daniel Cory (whose article we published in May 1968) that his celebrated work had been "a botch". He said he "knew so little", and thus had failed to make "a work of art". So what, said a critic in the "Times Literary Supplement"—"Since when does it matter how high or low a poet rates his own work. . . ?"*

This time the problem is even thornier than aesthetics: the notorious Pound politics which led to his arrest as an American by the US Army in Italy in 1945. He was indicted on a charge of treason for broadcasting Axis propaganda on Rome radio during the War. (After being confined to a Washington psychiatric hospital for 13 years, he was released and returned to Italy where he died in 1972 at the age of 87.) Now the thorny question is (after all the research has unearthed the relevant documents)—what kind of "fascist" was Ezra Pound? and how "treasonable" were his fulminations? Let a new controversy begin.

This is an extract *from Humphrey Carpenter's biography of Ezra Pound entitled "A Serious Character"—or, as Ole Ezra liked to put it, "a seereeyus kerakter"—which is to be published by Faber and Faber on 31 May 1988 at £20.00. Humphrey Carpenter is also the author of biographical studies of J. R. R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, and W. H. Auden.*

M.J.L.

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Ezra now thought of using the radio as an alternative means of communication between Italy and America. He visited Rome and suggested to the propaganda authorities—apparently to the Minister of Popular Culture himself, Alessandro Pavolini, the supremo of all propaganda activities—a wireless programme on the lines of the printed matter he had proposed to Villari:

> "I . . . suggested that as it cost 30 cents per letter [to write to America], it would convenience me to use the air in communicating with several etc. Well the Ministro looked at me careful and said in perlite words to the effect that: Ez, or probably he said 'Mio Caro Signore', if you think you can use OUR air to monkey in America's INTERNAL politics you got another one comin'."

Later, Ezra would say: "It took me, I think it was, TWO years, insistence and wangling etc. to GET HOLD of their microphone."

Though his earlier approaches to the authorities had met with a rebuff, he tried again. On 25 April 1940, while in Rome, he went to the Ministry of Popular Culture, this time hoping to see the Director General of the Propaganda Service, Armando Koch, and to convince him that "the absolute domination of the Jews in the North American press and publishing" made it quite impossible to have the Italian viewpoint aired there. His argument was that "at least those few Americans who see the truth" should "illuminate their own fellow-citizens".

The Ministry of Popular Culture, "*Minculpop*" in common parlance, was intended to control all areas of Italian cultural life as well as administer press censorship and propaganda. In practice it was far less effective than Goebbels' similar enterprise in Berlin, not least because of shortage of cash. The official who saw Ezra on this visit said his proposals were impossible because it "would need a lot of money" to launch effective propaganda at America; to which Ezra replied: "It doesn't need a lot of money but a lot of intelligence."

He now began again to consider whether broadcasting might be more effective than writing. On 31 March 1940 he wrote to Ronald Duncan from Rapallo:

> "Blasted friends left a goddam radio here yester. Gift. God damn destructive and dispersive devil of an invention. . . . Only stuff fit to hear was Tripoli, Sofia and Tunis. Howling music in two of 'em and a cembalo in Bulgarea. And a double sense of the blessedness of silence when the damn this is turned off."

But the radio set, left by Natalie Barney and a companion, made him think seriously about the medium, or at least about its potential.

"What drammer or teeyater *wuz*, radio is", he told Duncan dogmatically. He suggested that, if properly used, radio might "stop diffuse writing" by imposing more concision and clarity than print demanded. There were also "the histrionic developments in announcing"—the actual techniques of performance at the microphone, which would present a new challenge to someone who had previously only used pen and typewriter.

He started listening regularly to the radio. It occurred to him that he had really anticipated the radio effect "in first third of Cantos" (the montage of different voices), and had been able to write the John Adams Cantos, a monologue by a single voice, "because I was the last survivin' monolith who did not have a bloody radio in the 'ome", but now it was impractical to ignore the medium.

Ezra was isolated in Rapallo, with little coming in from the outside world, dependent on what was in his own head, his small library, and the heavily censored propaganda-laden Italian and German newspapers. Only the radio kept him in touch with the world as it seemed outside Italy and his own mind. He listened to the BBC, but did not care for it, remarking that it sounded like "the cold, evil voice of mendacity, and needless excitement". He was reduced to reading anti-Semitic material that the Mosley organisation had sent him in the mid 1930s, which at the time he had tossed aside. In one of their books he found the allegation that the Jews were controlled by a central authority, the Kahal, which wanted to stir up war because it would benefit nickel production. He wrote about this in *Meridiano di Roma* in March 1940, where his article was found and reprinted by the Nazi *News from Germany*, which Ezra took throughout the war.

English and American periodicals might be beyond Ezra's reach now, but the Italian papers often welcomed him into print. He contributed to the daily *Giornale di Genova*, to a Milan journal of Fascist groups in universities, and frequently to *Meridiano di Roma*, where he usually wrote on economics, and where his articles were almost always placed on the front page alongside speeches by major Fascists. However, the editor, Cornelio di Marzio, took pains to dissociate the paper from necessary concurrence with Ezra's views, and deliberately left his many errors of grammar and spelling uncorrected, to underline the impression that he and his staff regarded the American poet as an oddity, an amusement rather than a serious commentator.

NOBODY IN AUTHORITY in Rome in 1940 objected to Ezra Pound's enrolment as a broadcaster. The security services questioned whether his offer to collaborate might have "ulterior motives", but did not suggest what these might be. Ezra afterwards said the final decision to employ him was made by Andriano Ungaro of *Minculpop*, "an Italian liberal who had the guts to initial my broadcasts".

At first, during the closing weeks of 1940, he was only invited to send in scripts to Rome for others to read on the air, but on 21 January 1941 he had his first appointment to go in person to the studios that *Ente Italiano Audizione Radio*, the Italian broadcasting service, had established for short-wave overseas transmissions. These were on the top floor of *Minculpop* in Via Veneto. That day, Ezra made his first recording for the "American Hour", a programme of news, comment, and music, which had been transmitted for the previous three-and-a-half months and was audible in Britain and much of Europe as well as the USA and the Pacific.

"The United States", he began his talk:

> "should try to understand the last twenty years of European history, before going too far in finding themselves involved in the War. Democracy was created in America

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and this is the place where it must be saved. The peace of the world is set forth through the good government from the interior."

It was mild stuff. After all, America was not yet participating in the War, and a strong lobby existed in Washington that wished to leave Europe to sort out its own mess. No one in Rome could object to beaming comment such as this across the Atlantic, and on the strength of his first recordings Ezra was engaged to supply the "American Hour" with regular broadcast talks, and to come to Rome to record them in batches.

After a few further sessions in the studio, it became apparent that he was not a run-of-the-mill political commentator. First, there was the matter of his opening words. He was asked to begin each talk by identifying himself in some such form as "Ezra Pound speaking". In practice, after the scripts had been vetted by a *Minculpop* official, and he was left in the studio with only a recording engineer who did not understand English, he would depart from the typed text and provide himself with a real P. T. Barnum send-off:

"Europe calling! Pound speaking! Ezra Pound speaking!"
"Old Ezra speaking! Pound speaking!"
"Ezra Pound speakin' from Europe for the American heritage!"
"Dearly beeloved brevrem, this is ole Ezra speaking."

The medium of radio was absolutely irresistible to him. 'I don't so much write as I roar", he remarked in a letter to James Laughlin. "A New technique/vurry funny after WRITING."

He approached the microphone just as he had tackled any art or subject that was unfamiliar to him: as something that he could master overnight, providing he were sufficiently critical of his own work. There was no need to refer to the so-called professionals. When the studio engineers, struggling to balance his unpredictable decibels, which ranged from whisper to shout, asked him to keep a more "even tone of voice", he told them that if he was too quiet they could "turn on more current". He would not be overawed by technicalities.

The Italian Government officials whose duty it was to monitor overseas broadcasting began to wonder what the "American Hour" had let itself in for. Two months after Ezra had recorded his first talk, the Military Intelligence department contacted the radio staff to say that one of their colonels had had a talk with the American Ambassador, and neither of them felt Ezra should continue to be let anywhere near a microphone. Similarly, Luigi Villari of the Institute of Overseas Cultural Relations tried to warn the radio people:

"There is no doubt in my mind that Ezra Pound is insane! He is a pleasant enough madman and he is certainly a friend of Italy, but in the course of two interviews I recently had with him, I heard criticism, circumspection, accusations etc. that have rather alarmed me. . . . It is advisable that such things be stopped from the start."

Ezra had apparently been grumbling about the behaviour of those officials who had tried to block him. When he heard criticisms such as Villari's he dismissed them, in rather curious terminology, as a plot by "capitalist reactionaries". Now he had arrived in the studio, he was not going to be pushed out again.

HE ACQUIRED a journalist's rail pass, which made travel from Rapallo much cheaper, and would go to Rome for a couple of weeks at a time, to record two dozen or so scripts that he had written at home. He always stayed at the Albergo d'Italia in the Via Quattro Fontane; he would arrive there with his portable typewriter and a pile of books, so that he could look up quotations and make last-minute changes in the scripts.

On his recording days, he would hurry off to the Via Veneto in his big hat and thick tweed overcoat, a garment ridiculously heavy for the Rome weather, and would arrive at the studios in the rushed manner that had become habitual. "Time, damn it/never enough TIME", he wrote in a 1936 letter. Charles Olson noted that he would enter a room

". . . with a movement peculiar to himself, both like a loaded gun and with the sort of blind swing of a battering ram. . . . Part of it's restlessness to get things going, which accounts for a motion to the right and ahead, as though to hurry past one. And some feeling of anxiety that if he doesn't unload, he may lose what's on his mind. . . . But it is the blindness which is the remaining sense, over concentrated, obsessional, rushing ahead of the reality . . . impatience, impatience."

Now that Ezra had become a regular contributor to the programme, he was sometimes asked to take part in unscripted round-table discussions of the news; but he was never comfortable in these, and would ask the producer to map out topics in advance so that he could prepare what he was going to say. In the event the plan was not usually adhered to, and this disconcerted him. Once or twice he tried his hand at writing slogans for use in other parts of the programme; the art of propaganda fascinated him, and he suggested that a chair in such a discipline should be established in some university. Occasionally, his proposals for music broadcasts were followed—"I had them play Vivaldi until the disks wore out", he told Charles Olsen. Mostly "Giorgio" Page[1] restricted him to writing and recording his own talks, which were used at the rate of two or three a week, each being broadcast three times (the programme was repeated so that it could be beamed at different parts of the world).

Ezra always emphasised that he was "an independent speaker", an outside contributor as opposed to "the REGULAR staff speakers", and that he had only "obtained the concession" to speak on the radio after battering on the doors of authority, rather than accepting any offer of a job. Moreover "no one ever suggested to me what I should say over the radio. . . . All talks were my own idea and I was at no time ever coerced by anyone in any way either directly or indirectly." (He said this during a 1945 interrogation, when it would have been in his interest to claim the opposite—to say

[1] George Nelson Page, editor of the "American Hour". During the War he renounced his American citizenship and became legally an Italian.

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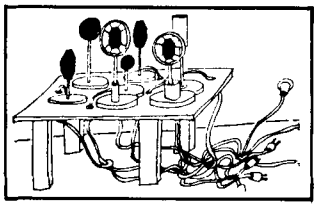
that he had only broadcast as the result of coercion, and was not expressing his own opinions at all.) Nevertheless, though not a staff member, he was paid for his broadcasts from the outset.

For the first time since his marriage in 1914 he found himself obliged to try to earn a living. Since Italy had entered the War, Dorothy's income from England had stopped coming through, and her assets there were sequestered by the authorities for the duration of the hostilities, under Enemy Property regulations. Such royalties as Ezra was owed by Faber and Faber or any other publisher could not be sent, and Homer's pension[2] from the USA was only arriving erratically. Italian banks now generally refused to cash American cheques, on the grounds that mail boats were being intercepted by British warships. Ezra said he had applied to become a regular broadcaster largely because a German officer at the Rapallo tennis club "told me they were paying good money".

He was indeed paid "quite a good sum", as one *Minculpop* official put it—a little over 350 lire per talk, which (thanks to inflation) had become equivalent to $17.00, the price of half a dozen new books. If he had recorded only one broadcast at a time, the money would scarcely have covered his travel and accommodation in Rome, but in batches of two dozen for each journey from Rapallo it produced a modest but steady and valuable income for himself and his dependants. His need of it is indicated by the frequency with which he complained to *Minculpop*'s finance department about the tardiness of payments.



POUND'S TALKS were supposed to last about ten minutes, though since they were not broadcast live, he could vary the length a little as he chose. When preparing them, he would look through the Italian papers and listen to any foreign radio station he could tolerate. "I definitely tried to listen to London", he said in one of his talks, "but with the passage of time I listen to London less." Off the air he spoke of "the shit of the BBC".

His main purpose in writing the scripts, he said, was to induce his audience to "listen to historic information in order to understand fascism and how to beat the financiers". He claimed that this could not be called propaganda, at least not official propaganda: "I was not sending axis propaganda but my own." Certainly neither *Minculpop* nor the radio staff gave him more than minimal guidance on subject matter. Consequently he produced the usual Poundian *mélange* of current affairs, "broken mirrors" from his reading and reflection, clusters of favourite codewords, familiar names, and stock ideas.

He claimed not only that each talk fitted together into a perceptible shape, but that there was also a sequence of ideas running right through the series, so that "the conversation of February coheres with that of April". In fact, though certain themes rose to the surface and recurred for several weeks, they usually vanished and gave way to other preoccupations. Shrewdly, he perceived that too smooth a presentation at the microphone would be deadening: "Nothing solemn or formal will hold the American auditor. If I don't sound a bit cracked and disjointed, they will merely twirl the button and listen to the next comic song, dance or ballyhoolah 'Soapopry'. Hence the . . . American dialects etc." So, at last he was able to do with his voice what he had done on paper for years; and he gave a truly spectacular performance.

A TYPICAL BROADCAST—many have been preserved on record in Washington—begins with "filler" music, after which a female announcer with a flat, formal voice reads a station identification, first in Italian, then in English: "Good evening. This is the Italian Broadcasting System, transmitting a special programme for the Western United States and Canada, the Pacific area, New Zealand and Australia. We open our programme this evening with a talk by Ezra Pound, entitled 'To Be Late'."

There is a brief pause as the disc of Ezra's talk is started; then a powerful shout: "EUROPE CALLING! EZRA POUND SPEAKING!"

The voice drops into a cosy, folksy drawl for the opening remarks: "Ah hear one of mah ex-editors has bin' sayin', oh yeah, Pound talks are all right, but they *arrrre*—[he rolls his rs with ridiculous exaggeration]—what was it? 'belated'? No, he said, uh, they're 'retarded' was it? *Out of date*, um, *out of date*, that was it.

"Well, dammit, two things. If yew hadn't bin such *mutts*, you woulda *heerd* me, and Céline for that matter, long before now! Some of yew woulda thought about what that good man, L.-F.Céline, an' the present speaker, started sayin' a long *taime* ago [an almost Texan drawl on *taime*].

"Ah started long befoh' Céline's far's Ah can make aht, Ah spose he's fifteen or twenty years younger 'n Ah am, unless o' coss he took up his young days doctorin' in the Paris suburbs, an' only got roun' t' writin' as he had got through with his patients.

"He says in one place, folks don' unnerstan' him, or they unnerstan' him all wrong. . . . Ah'll translate it from the original . . ." And off he goes into a long quotation from Céline about his patients' perpetual inability to follow the precise instructions on a prescription—having given his audience no information about who Céline might be.[3]

"The Yew-nited States", he eventually continues, "may take twenty years or more t' get t' where Céline was ten years ago. Ah be late? Ah am belated? Ah am not an *alarrrrm clock*, expected t' tell unhearing America about every fust book by a noo European author, especially if Ah've said things analogous before the said author had broken into print.

"Céline writes with the clarity of Remy de Gourmont. He is a *grrrreat wrrrriter*. The search for *rrrr*eality leads men of

[2] Homer Loomis Pound, Ezra's father.

[3] Louis-Ferdinand Céline (1894-1961), French doctor and novelist, anti-Semite, and wartime contributor to the French collaboration press.

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differrrrent races t' similar private discoveries. In fact that is the basis of science, which *rrr*elativity tries to destroy.

"Céline denies that there is any fundamental and irrrrremediable hate between the Frrrrench and the Gerrrrmans, That was mah own conclusion after four years in Paris. Hence of course Mister R*ooo*-se-velt's dee-term-in-ation to starve the French in unoccupied France. . . ."

AND SO HE CONTINUES for another five or six minutes, oscillating between Roosevelt's supposed desire to embroil the USA in the War for his own unscrupulous ends, and the wisdom of Céline, whose remarks on "Yewgenics" and the Jews are quoted with relish. Then comes the pay-off.

"Mebbe in time the Amurrican cawledge boys wil git roun' t' readin' me, or Céline, or some of the livin' authors. . . . Time t' read Céline for the simple truths. . . . You may be a bit late in startin' . . . Ezra Pound speakin'."

The announcer returns to the microphone with her flat, rather bored tones: "You have just heard a talk by Ezra Pound entitled 'To Be Late'. This is the Italian Broadcasting System. Our musical presentation this evening consists of a concert of light music. . . ."

OCCASIONALLY IN the talk he makes a slight slip and corrects himself; often it is hard to distinguish the names he is citing; but in general it is a masterly performance. The voice is clearly pitched—the absurdly rolled *r*s help to throw the words across the poor-quality shortwave transmission, so that he comes over far better than the professional announcer—and the folksy manner is perfectly attuned to the style of the "fireside chat". Some of his listeners in the USA were astonished by the whole act, observing that the accents adopted were simply stage-American: "If Yankee", writes Charles Norman, "more nasal than anything ever heard north of Boston; if western, more 'folksy' and drawling than anything ever heard west of the Mississippi."[4] But the very absurdity was itself a draw to listeners.

The Céline script is typical of what Ezra wrote for the microphone. His talks usually began with the bold statement of a theme, such as "Brooks Adams observed that after Waterloo no power had withstood the power of the usurers". The exposition of the theme (if it could be called that) would include citation of personal experience, recollections of remarks made to him, and snippets from his own reading and published writings, with allusions rarely explained. Such names as "the *Little Review*", "Major Douglas", and " Doctor William C. Williams" would be dropped in throughout with no concession to the listener. He often made play with puns, such as "Chiang Kike Shek", or "the nude eel" and "new steal". The broadcast would sometimes end with an injunction to the listener to "look into that", or a rhetorical question such as "Why did you get into this War?"

Just now and then, doubts crept into the talks about who, if anyone, might be listening. "I was wonderin' if anybody listened to what I said on Rome Radio and an experienced wellbroken journalist said: don't worry, there'll always be some fellow in a newspaper office sitten there, trying to get something for his column or something." As late as 1945, he was still wondering about this: "What I am in absolute ignorance of is: whether anyone actually heard my broadcasts. . . . The only auditors I know were foreigners in Florence."

But he thought highly of the broadcasts, and hoped to print them in book form, available in England and America (though even he could not imagine when this would be possible). Indeed, he regarded the scripts as essential instruction for the rising generation; he said that he honestly did not know where else "the young men of England and America" could get material "to build their souls, or at least their minds for tomorrow . . . except from my broadcasts".

AFTER A FEW MONTHS, he was officially warned to stick to literary matters and not to pontificate about current affairs. "I gather that if I am to go on with these talks", he told his listeners during 1941, "I shall have gradually more to say about letters and less about international politics." He was asked if he could not discuss contemporary American writing—that was the sort of thing a poet should talk about—but he discovered a *Minculpop* official who backed him, and who was "furious at the idea that ANYbody in the office would have thought they knew enough to amend my Ezment". Eventually his critics gave up, and left him entirely alone to pursue his idiosyncratic course; he said he had refused to let them "change a comma" in his texts.

Nothing could rein him in. In the same broadcast in which he mentioned the attempt to restrict him to literature, he revived his 1939 idea that America should

> ". . . give Guam to the Japanese in return for one set of colour and sound films of the 300 best Noh dramas. The films could not be delivered at once, so we would not need to give up Guam all at once. . . . I ask the impartial auditor whether the individual American citizen wouldn't get a great deal MORE out of a set of such films as I saw, the one I saw in Washington two years ago, than the world out of a few tons of tungsten, with possibly a few family coffins thrown in."

The Rome Radio staff, if they listened closely to the broadcasts (which seems doubtful), must have been astonished at the subjects he would turn to: a Vivaldi oratorio he had just heard in Siena; poor Nicholas Murray Butler, who as head of the Carnegie Fund had annoyed him in the 1920s ("Ole Nick . . . oleaginous . . . the old scamp"); A. R. Orage of the *New Age*; and a host of other characters from Ezra's past. At the microphone on 12 February 1942 he read his audience Canto 46, full of references to "the Reverend Eliot", "Max's drawings", "G.B.S.", and "Mr Wells". Even his more comprehensible paragraphs were laced with such allusions as "Ole Frida started the cave of the calf" (Madame Strindberg, whose Golden Calf night-club had been a Vorticist haunt),

[4] Charles Norman, an American journalist, author of an imaginatively researched but rather impressionistic and selective account of Pound's life—*Ezra Pound* (1960)—and of *The Case of Ezra Pound* (1948).

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"Kumrad Kumminkz" (E. E. Cummins, who had written about the USSR), and "ole Doc Williams".

One day in New Jersey, William Carlos Williams's wife Florence was told by a bank clerk that he had heard a curious voice on the radio the other night. It was coming from Italy, and it was muttering about "ole Doc Williams of Rutherford, New Jersey". Williams snapped to his wife: "What the hell right has he to drag me into his dirty messes?"

If Ezra had known about Williams's reaction he would have been puzzled. In the broadcast during 1941, he unvaryingly spoke of "We Americans", never "you". On one occasion he described his work at the microphone as "exercising my native right as an American to speak to my own compatriots". And during these months before the USA entered the War it would have been hard to prove, in a court of law, that he was doing anything else.

HE SOON BEGAN to regard himself as an expert on radio technique, and he offered the Rome Radio staff some hints for a more "snappy" style of presentation, which the programme certainly needed. The "American Hour", he said, might begin with a crisp slogan, something on the lines of "*What about freedom from debt*?" The news bulletin should be "so condensed as though for every useless word there was a fine". Then might come a "Fanfare", followed by the announcement: "Dr Pound is approaching the microphone!" The only one of the suggestions to be followed was the use of "Doctor" to introduce him. He also sent in technical reports on the quality of his own transmissions. On 28 July 1941: Excellent delivery last night. Voice absolutely clear and every word 'visible', except for a few ORful KRRumpzzz! of static or atmospheric or whatever that BLITZED out a few phrases—afraid 'scum at the top' was lost in the thunder."

In this mood of professionalism, he began to correspond with a fellow broadcaster in Berlin. An émigré from the British Union of Fascists, William Joyce had originally been employed by the *Reichsrundfunk* as a newsreader in English. Like Ezra, he thought that the bulletins were poorly written—as indeed they were; once, Joyce had to read a report in which a torpedo was described as having struck "the machines and kettles of the boat". So he began to write his own topical talks, which he was allowed to broadcast. Just as Ezra caricatured his own imagined listeners by adopting a folksy mid-American drawl, so Joyce, an Irishman, aped the "typical" Englishman by assuming an absurd upper-crust manner, which quickly earned him the nickname "Lord Haw-Haw". Unlike Ezra, he broadcast anonymously, but Ezra discovered his identity when, in May 1941, four months after he had started his own broadcasts, he wrote a fan letter to him.

"Lord Haw-Haw" replied on 3 June, saying he had been "delighted" by Ezra's praise, telling him that the time of the broadcast had been altered, and warning him amicably that

> ". . . in the very near future I propose to inflict a real letter on you. Meanwhile all the best. *Heil Hitler*. William Joyce."

Unlike Ezra, Joyce had swiftly created an enormous popular audience, thanks to the eerily knowing manner in which he referred to events in Britain, as if he were being supplied with intimate inside knowledge by a network of spies. In fact, like Ezra, he simply picked up material for his talks from the news bulletins. Like Ezra, too, he believed that what he was doing was for the good of his own country: he wanted to save Britain from the domination of Jewish financiers. His last message before his execution in 1946 was: "May Britain be great once again. . . . I am proud to die for my ideals."

Ezra wrote back to him during June 1941:

> "Dear Joyce,
>
> Do write at length, if you ever get the time. . . . Present schedule I am supposed to be shot over the air at 4.10 a.m. twice a week Tuesday and Thursday which I don't hear as I have only medium wave receiver. . . . I don't suppose you have time to listen, but shd be glad to profit by experienced criticism. God knows HOW one gets an idea into a lunatic asylum. And the idea that Brits are subject to REASON is probably an error if not downright lunacy. Can't remember when I first heard of yr transmissions, but have been hearing 'em daily ever since. . . . I suffer from lack of NEW information. Stuff I wrote three years ago can not be regarded as war propaganda. But I lack new data. . . . I don't know whether anyone in Berlin reads what I write in Italian?"

Joyce replied to this on 30 June:

> ". . . my work is heavier than ever just at present. . . . I agree with you that it is not easy to make an impression of an obvious nature on the thing called the British public, but I nevertheless think that we are succeeding and that the results will be cummulative [*sic*] when they emerge. I shall certainly make a point of listening to your transmissions, though I shall not presume to criticise. Your methods are unique and they belong to you alone. I am quite sure that nobody could imitate them successfully.
>
> With kind regards. . . ."

Ezra did not hesitate to bother a busy man if he thought the cause required it. He wrote to Joyce on 18 July:

> "You needn't worry about the word 'criticise'/call it guidance if you like. You have been at the job longer than I have. New technique for Uncle Ez. . . . I think I have got my voice right at last. I . . . got back in time to hear . . . the eleven P.M. medium wave transmission for England/ . . . I think I was right to transmit from Rome/I know this country and do not know Germany: and can not speak German well enough to make my ideas clear. Also I cd/ never stand a winter in Berlin. . . . I shd/like a few German contacts. . . . I couldn't get to Berlin except by official invite with paid expenses. . . . HEUL [*sic*] HITLER and *nach* Vladivostock."

He wrote to Joyce again on 29 July asking him to draw his department's attention to "A talk by Princess Tourbetzkoi" on the Bolsheviks. Joyce acknowledged this briefly. Ezra wrote again on 16 September:

"Am still feeling lack of coordination. . . . I mean IF we

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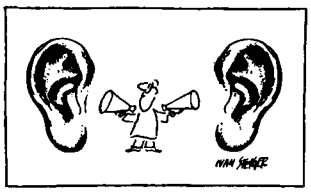
can hold out a few months longer, the American electorate will I think squash that unspeakable louse, that cunt of all infamy Roosevelt at the autumn elections next year. . . . I am not convinced the kikes meant England to WIN/or that the drive to war is the same as a drive to WIN a war. . . .I hear you three times an evening when I am here in Rap/ . . .but I go it blind/I have no idea if anyone listens. . . . I want more printed matter from Germany. . . . Is there anybody in the *Rundfunk* that can send 'em to me. . . . Isn't it time to be more specific about JEW interests in Finland. . . . Also a little more information about Hambro might be got from Quisling or someone. . . . yrz E.P."

This letter was four pages long. Joyce did not reply, and there was no further correspondence.



ANTI-SEMITISM was the chief motif of one of Ezra's 1941 broadcasts. His theme was that those who wanted to "destroy every last vestige of the AMERICAN heritage" were influenced by "hearin' kike radio, and I proposed to use the word KIKE regardless of race. Use it to cover honorary Jews, AND TO EXCEPT honest Jews where we find 'em."

There were, he said, "clever Kikes runnin' ALL our communication system". And he concluded: "You can't go to war without small meanness to SOME of the neighbours. You get het up over the sorrows of Mrs Ikestein, the tailor's wife; you can't DO anything about it without doin' dirt to Giovanni the grocer, and the Hungarian livin' next door." In the same talk he seemed also to attack anti-Semitism. He said it was nonsense to regard the USA as racially pure—"We are all intermixed"—and remarked that racism begins when "things are scarce" and consequently "there is a conspiracy, to shut out someone or other". But such disclaimers were becoming rarer now, and a hatred of Jewish usury was a fundamental assumption of his broadcasts from the start. The scripts are spattered with such phrases as "kikery", "Anglo-Judaea", "Kike propaganda", "shyster", "judaeocracy".

As the War and the broadcasts went on, he seemed to feel less and less need to mince matters about the Jews. He was not ordered to take an anti-Semitic line by the propaganda staff in Rome—the Mussolini Government was not yet concerned with the Jewish question—but he could hear Lord Haw-Haw and other Berlin broadcasters ranting about the Jews, and in such a climate he was unlikely to play the liberal.

Alongside the increasing expressions of anti-Semitism and the almost incomprehensibe allusions to old friends and enemies which made up much of the broadcasts there were, now and then, some shafts of perception. During 1941, he observed that "a peace with American war bases all over the whole of the planet would be no more a real peace than Versailles was", and of 20th-century American presidents: "You can't tell me that . . . any of 'em were chosen, nominated because anybody really felt: well now, that is what we need in the White House."

He regarded his audience for the earliest talks as exclusively American, but later turned his attention to Britain, telling his listeners some time around mid-1941: "I have not considered it suitable to meddle in the internal affairs of another country." He still believed the majority in Britain did not want war, yet there were moments when he seemed almost to understand how the conflict appeared to them:

> "Yes, I know what the decent English are resistin' and what they were even ready to fight to resist. And if they had any clear headedness, that would be dandy. They want their cultural heritage, they think the English once had nice manners."

But he went on to say that the Nazis had "wiped out bad manners in Germany"; whatever this was supposed to mean, he no longer felt the need to consider the British view further.

If the British Government had their way, he felt "England is to be a Jew-owned deer park with tearooms". And in another script, entitled simply "England", he branded the entire nation as Jew-ridden:

> "Nothing can save you, save an affirmation that you are English. Whore Belisha is not. Isaacs is not. No Sassoon is an Englishman, racially. No Rothschild is English . . . no Baruch, Morgenthau, Cohen, Lehman, Warbug, Kuhn, Khan, Schiff, Sieff, or Solomon was ever yet born Anglo-Saxon. And it is for this filth that you fight."

He took the anti-Semitic line towards Russia too: Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin presented a "triangular Darby and Joan of the three hebraicized governments". Stalin he dismissed as a criminal, a "Georgian assassin", "the old Georgian train-robber". The "Bolshevik anti-morale" came, he said, "out of the Talmud, which is the dirtiest teaching that any race ever codified". And he began to preach racial purity. In the Céline talk he spoke of the desirabiility of breeding "thoroughbreds", while in another script he recommended "two children MINIMUM" for "real Americans", "cause if two people don't reproduce two people, the race DIMINISHES and you get invaded: as the United States had been invaded by VERMIN".

He had begun to sign other letters besides those to William Joyce with "*Heil Hitler*". He concluded a letter to old Professor Ibbotson with a swastika. Yet, just as before the War, he seemed studiously to be avoiding any discussion of Hitler's character and objectives. He suggested to his British listeners that, in return for the German attack on Russia, Britain should have said to Hitler: "If you can stop the Moscovite horror, we will let bygones be bygones. We will try to see at least HALF of your argument."

AT TIMES he seemed to have devised his own version of Nazi doctrine. "HITLER stands for putting men over machines", he told his audience. "If you don't know that, you know NOTHING." He gave no explanation of what he meant.

His daughter Mary noticed that:

> ". . . emotionally he had no leanings towards Germany. The same Boches who had killed some of his best friends . . . were lurking in the background. . . . Culturally . . . the *Götterdämmerung* and a Valhalla at the end of it was

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> far removed from his aesthetic imagery. But there was a certain kind of discipline and honesty that seemed to appeal to him. . . ."

He might have committed himself further to the Nazi cause if he had not found Germans so comic. Rapallo became a favourite resort for off-duty German officers, and when out walking with Mary, Ezra would shake his head as they passed: "They walk as though they had swallowed a broomstick. You should see their necks at table, stiff, stiff, stiff." He wrote to Wyndham Lewis that while most "teutons" were certainly "as good as frawgs", one had to admit that "the hun comic, is comic, vurry visibly so". He wished that all Germany could be "peasants like the Tirol", and after the War he emphasised: "I did NOT want a Kaisertum uberalles. Or an ADOLF uberalles", but while broadcasting from Rome he simply kept silent on this issue.

At no time, either before or after America entered the War, did Ezra specifically address Allied troops and suggest they should mutiny or revolt. He emphasised this in his defence in 1943. His claim all along was that he was supporting the "United States heritage", and he challenged his listeners to "find anything hostile to the Constitition of the USA in these speeches". He was, he often said, "speaking as an American citizen". And in his book on Ezra, the man who conducted his legal defence in 1945 argues that he was doing nothing in the broadcasts but "exercising the good old American prerogative of criticising his government. . . . The criticism . . . reminded me of the way Wall Street bankers and lawyers used to talk."[5]

Certainly there were Americans who, in 1941, would have agreed with virtually every world Ezra said at the microphone about the United States Government, the European conflict, and the power of the Jews. Joseph Kennedy, father of the future president, had told Roosevelt that England would not fight, and tipped off the German Ambassador in Washington that many Americans, like himself, were sympathetic to Hitler and his ideals. The Ambassador reported to Berlin that Kennedy had told him:

> "It was not so much the fact that we wanted to get rid of the Jews that was harmful to us, but rather the loud clamour with which we accompanied this purpose. He himself understood our Jewish policy completely; he was from Boston and there, in one golf club and in other clubs, no Jews had been admitted for the past 50 years."

During the Battle of Britain, when Kennedy was Ambassador in London, he kept out of the capital for fear of the bombing, and declared that "the British have had it. They can't stop the Germans and the best thing is for them to learn to live with them." His remarks became so embarrassing to Washington that he was withdrawn from his Embassy. This, like later disgraces, Kennedy blamed on the influence of the Jews.

Mussolini knew nothings of Ezra's broadcasts. When a secretary passed one of Ezra's letters to him in 1943, he had to explain—since *Il Duce* had evidently forgotten—that its author was "an American". Camillo Pellizzi of the Fascist Institute of Culture observed Ezra at work at Rome Radio, and says that anyone in the régime who knew about the broadcasts was thoroughly puzzled by Ezra's motives: "Those in authority more than once asked me: 'But what does the fellow want? Can we be really sure that there isn't a code of some sort in what he says? Can you guarantee that he is not a spy?'" To which Pellizzi would reply that it required "an entire university course" to explain what was going on in the head of Ezra Pound.

EZRA's Italian acquaintances were equally puzzled as to why he was undertaking the broadcasts. His daughter Mary describes him in Siena in 1941: ". . . groping for facts. But few Italians were eager to enlighten him. In Siena they were mostly artists not interested in politics, or aristocrats interested mainly in keeping old privileges. They could not understand why an American should feel so strongly about saving Europe. Or why a poet should bother about economics."

Mussolini's increasing toadying towards Hitler had by now undermined much of his popular support in Italy. The country had on the whole been reluctant to enter the War, and many intellectuals who had pledged themselves to Fascism in the 1920s and 1930s now privately withdrew their support, not least because they objected to the anti-Semitism Berlin was trying to foist on them. Ezra's broadcasts could in no sense be said to represent Italian feeling—not that anyone who listened to them could have imagined them to be anything except the product of a highly eccentric mind. . . .

His broadcasts continued throughout the autumn and early winter of 1941. One of them was transmitted on the evening of 7 December, the day on which Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Ezra was in Rome when the news came through; he hurried back to Rapallo.

The Japanese attack astonished him. A few weeks later, in a broadcast, he described how "the last American journalist I saw, and that was the night before Arbour [*sic*] Day, told me the Japs would never etc. etc." He could not properly take in what had happened, or readjust his mental picture to fit it, for a full two months after the event. It was not a question of the USA voluntarily entering the War for dubious reasons (which he had expected), but of being dragged into it by the aggression of the Japanese, a nation for whom, since his early Fenollosa days,[6] he had felt deep admiration. On top of this was the blunt fact that, with America in the War, he would be apparently siding with the enemies of the USA if he continued to broadcast from Rome. A few weeks later he described his state of mind during the crisis:

> "On Arbour Day, Pearl Arbour Day, at 12 o'clock noon I retired from the capital of the old Roman Empire to Rapallo to seek wisdom from the ancients. I wanted to figure things out. I had a perfectly good alibi, if I wanted to play things safe. I was and am officially occupied with a new [Italian] translation of the Ta S'eu [*Ta Hio*] of Con-

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[5] Julien Cornell, *The Trial of Ezra Pound* (1966).

[6] Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), a populariser of oriental culture whose unpublished notebooks, chiefly translations from Chinese poetry and Japanese Noh plays, formed the basis for some of Ezra's early work.

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fucius. . . . That is, I have WORK thaaar for some years, if I don't die before I git to the middle. . . . There was to face this, the SITUATION. That is to say the United States had been for months ILLEGALLY at war, through what I considered was NOT, as far as I could see, all that could or should be desired. . . . It was obviously a mere question of hours . . . [before] the United States of America would be legally at war with the Axis.

I spent a month tryin' to figure things out, well did I? Perhaps I concluded sooner. At any rate I had a month clear to make up my mind about some things. . . .There was my old dad in bed with a broken hip; Lord knows who is going to mend it or whether it will mend. So—I read him a few pages of Aristotle in the Loeb Classical Library, English version to take his mind off it. Also to keep my own work in progress. Because for some time I have had in mind the need of comparing the terminology of Chinese and Greek philosophy, and also comparing that with the terminology of mediaevil [*sic*] Catholic theology.

No. For a man cut off from all his NORMAL contacts with the non-European world, I can't say I was destitute—mentally—there was plenty lyin' there for me to be busy about. . . ."

He breaks off this account of his self-questioning inconclusively.

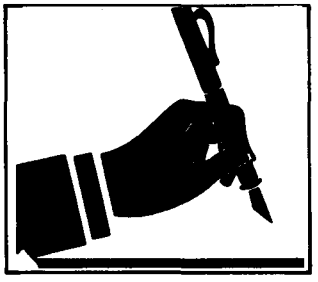
His remark that he "had a month clear to make up my mind" suggests that Rome Radio had told him to take the month off to consider his position. (He was away from the microphone for nearly two months.) Elsewhere in the same broadcast, he observes that the study of Confucius and Mencius was appropriate for his dilemma, since both men had been "up against similar problems . . . and seen empires fallin'". But he was in more difficulties than could be solved by the contemplation of ancient Chinese ethics.

HE WAS NEXT HEARD on the air on 29 January 1942. (In 1946 he said: "My mistake was to go on after Pearl Harbor.") He took one step that he thought would offer him some protection. For a while his broadcasts were preceded by an announcement (drafted by him) intended to emphasise that he was broadcasting of his own free will and not acting as an enemy agent:

> "Rome Radio, acting in accordance with the Fascist policy of intellectual freedom and free expression of opinion by those who are qualified to hold it, following the tradition of Italian hospitality, has offered Dr Ezra Pound the use of the microphone twice a week. It is understood that he will not be asked to say anything whatsoever that goes against his conscience, or anything incompatible with his duties as a citizen of the United States of America."

Yet by emphasising that the broadcasts were entirely his own work and not the result of coercion, he was publicly taking full blame for the decision to carry on; and by informing listeners that he was still "a citizen of the United States", he was making himself even more vulnerable.

It would have been comparatively easy at this juncture to have taken Italian citizenship—several of his fellow broadcasters did so—and as a citizen of Italy he would have been entirely beyond the jurisdiction of the US Government and law courts; but there is no indication that he considered this step at any time. Apparently he had never entertained the possibility of legal charges that might be brought against him, and even if he had, it is highly unlikely that this would have driven him to renounce American citizenship. The theme of his broadcasts was that the USA should set its house in order, and he claimed that he had the right to make such demands only because he was a member of the American nation.



THE pre-broadcast announcement was used only a few times. Ezra did not care for its "rather forced definition of Fascism", and after a few weeks he and the radio authorities regarded it as unnecessary. However, he continued to take the line, for the rest of his life, that his broadcasts had simply been a manifestation of "free expression of opinion"—in 1946 he told a doctor in St Elizabeths[7] that he had been practising "a form of freedom of speech in a radio age", and the same idea is stated in Canto 74: "free speech without radio free speech is as zero".

In his first broadcast after Pearl Harbor, he spent much of the time ruminating about his two-month "retirement" from the microphone, though without explaining why he had decided to return to it. He went on: "It [is] my private belief that I could have avoided a war with Japan, if anybody had had the unlikely idea of sending me out there with any sort of official powers."

His chief theme during the next few weeks was deep regret that America had come into the conflict:

> "America COULD have stayed out of the war. . . . IF America had stayed neutral the war would now be over . . . . For the United States to be makin' war on Italy AND on Europe is just plain damn nonsense. . . . And for this state of things Franklin Roosevelt is more than any other one man responsible."

He feared that America would be in the War for 30 years, and told his listeners on 3 February 1942: "You are in it, and Lord knows who is goin' to git you out. . . . You are at war for the duration of the Tenno's pleasure." ("Tenno" is the Japanese Emperor.) Note the use now of "you" instead of "we Americans", which he had alway said before Pearl Harbor. He continued: "Nothin' in the Western World, nothin' in the whole of our Occident can help you to dodge that. Nothing can help you dodge it."

[7] St Elizabeths Hospital, the Federal psychiatric hospital in Washington, D.C., where he was committed by court order after the War, having been tried and found by the jury to be of unsound mind.

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HIS BROADCASTS were now monitored and transcribed in Washington, where the official transcript of this talk (supposedly as broadcast) reads: "You are at war for the duration of the General's pleasure. You are at war for the duration of Japan's pleasure. Nothing in the Western World . . . (*etc*)? Charles Norman's *The Case of Ezra Pound* (1948) quotes it with yet another variation: "You are at war for the duration of the Germans' pleasure. You are at war for the duration of Japan's pleasure. Nothing in the Western World . . . (*etc*)".

The Norman version has been taken up by other writers. The distortion of what Ezra actually said is not perhaps so very great—in many people's eyes the Japanese Emperor was almost as heinous as Hitler—but in a court of law his fate could have hung on such quotations and misquotations.

His attitude after Pearl Harbor was that the Allies had fallen into an even worse mess than before. "You do not know what has HAPPENED", he told his listeners on 28 May 1942:

> "And the first thing to DO about it is to pull OUT of this war—a war that you never ought to have flopped into. Every hour that you go on with it is an hour lost to you and your children. And every sane act you commit is committed in HOMAGE to Mussolini and Hitler. Every reform, every lurch towards the just price, toward the control of the market is an act of HOMAGE to Mussolini and Hitler. THEY are your leaders however much you are conducted by Roosevelt or sold up by Churchill. . . . You follow Hitler and Mussolini in EVERY CONSTRUCTIVE act of your Government. Damn you, you follow Mosley, go back and read over his programmes."

No doubt a prosecuting lawyer would have quoted this as evidence that Ezra was inciting mutiny or desertion among Allied troops. In fact he was discussing the conflict solely in terms of economics—of the "just price", "control of the market" (terms from Douglas and Gesell). The Mosley "programmes" he had in mind were the British Union of Fascists leader's early attempts to preach something like Social Credit. Ezra's view of the War was as unrealistic as ever.

Though he was not addressing the troops specifically, he was heard by them. George Dillon, Harriet Monroe's successor as editor of *Poetry*, wrote in that magazine describing how during military service in Europe, "when we dialed the shortwave programs during the rest periods, Pound was sometimes good for five minutes of modest entertainment. That is all it was, and I doubt whether any of us who listened to him felt anything but amusement, though we were not in a kindly mood. . . Pound . . . went on and on. But it was impossible to have any serious reaction."

THE BROADCASTS were not treated as entertainment in Washington, where monitors did their best to make transcripts of Ezra's tirades of obscure names, heard through bad shortwave reception. One monitor described "Confucius" (frequently cited by Ezra) as "confusions", while "Mencius" became "Mencken". Despite such errors, there was no doubt in official circles as to the nature of the broadcasts.

In April 1942 the US monitoring service notified the Department of Justice that Pound, behind enemy lines, was producing "a vicious tirade of anti-Administration and anti-American conversation", and in due course the FBI was requested to discover what it could about the poet and his activities before the War. Investigations began in December, and one of J. Edgar Hoover's agents visited William Carlos Williams to ask if he had heard the broadcasts. "I told him, no", says Williams, "though I had heard about them. Would I be able to identify the voice if I did hear it? No. I didn't think that would be possible though I might be fairly certain that it was he who was talking." Williams was told that the FBI would bring him records of the broadcasts (they were never in fact brought), and was asked if he himself were a loyal American citizen.

Williams had recently attacked Ezra in the American literary magazine, *Decision*, where, in view of what he had heard about the broadcasts, he called him "Lord Ga-Ga" and said he was a "pitiable spectacle", a "fool", a "case for the psychiatrists", who was bitter about his "failure to be recognised as a great man", a "spoiled brat" who had always longed to be the centre of attention. He asserted that Ezra was rooted in the past, could not understand the present, and "I think he hates humanity".

Ronald Duncan's West of England cottage was raided by plain-clothes police who observed accusingly: "You've printed Ezra Pound in your magazine". They searched the place for a radio transmitter. After they had gone, Duncan took all his letters from Ezra to be locked away in the Faber and Faber safe.

The April 1942 issue of *Poetry* had carried an article by an American poet, Eunice Tietjens, headed "The End of Ezra Pound". It began:

> "The time has come to put a formal end to the countenancing of Ezra Pound. For a number of years . . . he was associated with *Poetry*, and the association was valuable to both sides. Then he quarreled with us, as he has quarreled with everyone, yet continued to use the magazine as an outlet. . . . Now, so far as he and the rest of the English-speaking world of letters are concerned, he has effectively written *finis* to his long career as inspired *enfant terrible*."

Miss Tietjens—Ezra would surely have found amusement in that she bore the same surname as Ford Madox Ford's perfect gentleman in *Parade's End*—judged him to have been "of . . . great service to the art of poetry" but "never a major poet himself", and went on to various kinds of abuse before turning only at the end directly to the matter of the broadcasts. These she described as a

> ". . . deliberate attempt to undermine the country of his birth through enemy propaganda. Whether he is committing treason or not depends, technically, on whether he has become an Italian citizen or still retains his American passport. . . . That it should be one of the poets who is thus playing Lord Haw-Haw, no matter how ineffectually, seems to cast a slur on the whole craft. In the name of

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American poetry, and of all who practise the art, let us hope that this is the end of Ezra Pound."

This was the first suggestion in public that he might be committing treason.

Miss Tietjens gave no practical hint as to how Ezra should expedite his own end, but eighteen months later Ernest Hemingway had a specific suggestion. "If Ezra has any sense", he wrote to Archibald MacLeish, "he should shoot himself. Personally I think he should have shot himself somewhere along after the twelfth canto although maybe earlier."

EZRA DID NOT SEE the *Poetry* article, but he did hear that the London papers were reporting his broadcasts, and he quoted the *Sunday Times* calling his support of Fascism "an aberration". He answered this in a broadcast on 20 April 1942: "Has a fascist government itself ABERRATED, or has it aberred?" And he went on to cite the Mussolini régime's economic and industrial achievements: "Do I aber in admiring it? I think I do not. . . . And I reckon even the *Sunday Times* is about ready to wish some of the stuffed British shirts had aberrated more in my fashion."

He was now becoming more explicit about the treatment he envisaged for the Jews. "Don't start a pogrom", he said on 30 April 1942:

> "that is, not an old style killing of small Jews. That system is not good whatsoever. Of course if some man had a stroke of genius and could start a pogrom UP AT THE TOP, there might be something to say for it. But on the whole, legal measures are preferable. The sixty Kikes who started this war might be sent to St Helena as a measure of world prophylaxis. And some hyper-kikes, or non-Jewish kikes along with them."

The next month he described Jewry as "these dirty swine, out to destroy Bach's music. Bach? OUT. Shakespeare? OUT. . . . Damn civilization. The Kike is all out for power."

He was perhaps thinking of the poet Louis Zukofsky and other Jewish friends when he said on 1 June 1942: "The lone Jew is a subject of study. He seems a good fellow, but is he in some way cut off from the organization? Has he declined to kiss the magic rod—is he in exile—is that why he apparently has no more luck than the goyim?"

Olga Rudge[8] has always maintained that "none of Ezra's Jewish friends ever ratted on him"—that is, tried to harm him as a result of what he said in his broadcasts. His daughter Mary, when faced with this issue, is equally keen to defend him; but, like her mother, cites no particular argument. In a filmed interview she has said: "I shall make myself completely unpopular if I say that I think certain things have been distorted and blown up out of all proportion. . . . It's just one of those points where everyone becomes hysterical."

After the War, Ezra justified what he had said largely on the ground that it was spoken in ignorance of the Final Solution being implemented in Germany by the Nazis. "There were no gas ovens in Italy", he wrote to Archibald MacLeish in 1956. It is true that no internment, deportation, or slaughter of Jews took place in Italy until after Mussolini's downfall in 1943, but thereafter the situation changed drastically. Ezra's defence of himself to MacLeish continues: "E.P. did NOT, as you may, or possible do NOT know, advocate violence." But the suggestion of starting a pogrom "UP AT THE TOP", whether or not he meant it to be taken seriously, is nothing if not an incitement to violence.

He told Donald Hall in 1960 that the first he had learnt of the death camps was from the doctors in St Elizabeths. But it appears that he had gained a fairly detailed idea of the Nazi treatment of Jews during the war, by listening to Romano Bilenchi, a Left-wing sympathiser, who had talked to him in Rapallo during 1941 and told him about his meeting with a young German Jew who had escaped to Italy after the *SS* had massacred his family. Bilenchi records that this story "shook" Ezra, who

> ". . . said I was probably right . . . that the Jews taken individually, especially if they were poor, were human beings like ourselves. However, collectively, and controlled by the capitalists as they were, they had organised a relentless conspiracy against mankind. The conspiracy should be denounced, combated, and destroyed by political action and not, surely, by murders and massacres. Our discussion became rather heated. . . . I told Pound that it was Hitler and Himmler who had organised a conspiracy."

But Ezra remained "stubborn".

He was certainly prepared to let individual Jews undergo personal suffering for what he believed to be the public good: when in 1938 the Italian Government banned Jews from public office, from working in major industries or on large farms, and from marrying non-Jews (regulations that were only half-heartedly observed), he told a Jewish friend, Aldo Camerino: "I'm sorry for you, but they have done the right thing."

"I ASK YOU WHY WAS CHRIST CRUCIFIED?" he asked listeners to the American Hour. "He was crucified for trying to bust a racket." The whole War seemed to him, in July 1942, to be Europe's "rebellion against the pervasive, the ubiquitous Yidd". He now completely accepted the "Truth" of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (the document that was supposed to prove the existence of a Jewish conspiracy). "For God's sake, read the Protocols", he exhorted listeners in June 1942, "if the last copy hasn't been taken out of the bookstores. They were printed twenty years ago. I never bothered to read 'em till I had learned all that is in them from other sources, thereby convalidatin' the evidence." He was prepared to admit that "certainly they are a forgery", but that was "the one proof we have of their authenticity. The Jews have worked with forged documents for the past 24 hundred years."

[8] Olga Rudge, mother of Ezra's daughter Mary, born in 1925.

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He now mocked people who, like himself before the War, admitted to having a few likeable Jews among their friends, suggesting that anyone his listeners happened to dislike was probably Jewish. "What chance the Frenchman you dislike ISN'T a Frenchman AT ALL? . . . They are everywhere." He returned to his call for a pogrom at the top: "Kill 'em off at the top, pogroms start at the bottom and are NEVER so very effective." Another suggestion was "Don't start a pogrom; SELL 'em Australia . . . if they'll buy it."

He saw himself as participating in the same struggle as his grandfather Thaddeus, "fighting the same kikified usurers . . . trying to have the Government money run honest". Indirectly but definitely, he predicted an Axis victory: "The next peace will not be based on international lending. . . . And England will certainly have nothing what bloody ever to say about what its terms are."

MORE SPECIFICALLY, on 28 June 1942 he told English listeners: "You are NOT going to win this war. None of your best minds ever thought you could win it.' England had made such mistakes as choosing "birth control INSTEAD of eugenics". And, on "thoroughbreds":

> "Seems fairly clear that you fix a breed by LIMITING the amount of alien infiltration. You make a race by homogenity and by avoiding INbreeding. . . . Means no hardship to anyone. . . . No argument has ever been sprouted against it. You like it in dogs and horses."

He admitted that "halfbreeds" might have "cleverness" sometimes, but they "don't come quite solid, sometimes from a peculiar sort of stoppage INSIDE the head, leadin' to a kind of sense of frustration."

On 18 May 1942, he began to talk directly about Hitler and Germany. He called Hitler "that opponent of your infamies" and argued that:

> ". . .the Anglo-Jew world is fighting . . . the German PHANTOM, NOT the reality. And that phantom has been built out of lies. . . . Now I almost never talk of Germany because I have seen very little of Germany. . . Ole Ford toted me about Hessen Darmstadt in 1911. . . . Since then I have been to Vienna and to Frankfurt for Antheil's opry, and passed thru Munich and from Wien I went up to Wörgl."

But in youth he had so soaked himself in the Mediterranean that:

> "I didn't cotton to German literature. And then philology, ERROR of old German university system got my goat. . . . Also being in England 12 years, I certainly saw the last war from the London angle. . . . BUT JUSTICE IS JUSTICE. And as to LYING I reckon Hitler has been lied about more than any man livin' except Mussolini."

In this broadcast he examined *Mein Kampf*, which he said he knew from the Italian translation. He described its ideology as follows:

> "First, HEALTH, health of the race. . . . Breed GOOD and preserve the race. . . . SECONDLY . . . a political system in which you can't pass the buck. . . . Hitler, having seen the Jew puke in the German democracy, was out for responsibility. . . . And the THIRD point was a study of history. To look at the history.
>
> Waal, now WHAT program does this CONTRADICT? . . . You may see why the stick screen was erected, and people began to speak evil of Hitler."

He was now prepared to describe Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy as "those two great movements".

NO SCRIPTS, transcripts or recordings exist for any broadcast made by Ezra between 16 July 1942 and 18 February 1943 (with the exception of a talk broadcast on 19 September and another on 9 December, but very likely these had been recorded earlier in the year). Payments to him from *Minculpop* stopped too, though for a shorter period, from 12 August to 19 October 1942. Clearly, he ceased broadcasting for a time, but there is no indication as to why.[9]

Ezra resumed regular broadcasting in February 1943 with a talk on "Franklin D. Frankfurter Jewsfeld". In April he suggested: "I think it might be a good thing to hang Roosevelt and a few hundred yids IF you can do it by due legal process, NOT otherwise", though "sometimes one feels that it would be better to get the job done somehow, ANY how, than to delay execution."

Though to Mary, "It looked as though the war would go on forever", the Germans were beginning to retreat in Africa and Russia, and there was an air of desperate optimism in the Axis news bulletins rather than real confidence. Ezra's broadcasts, however, made no reference to Allied advances—indeed, he scarcely ever spoke of actual events of the War, for the conflict seemed to exist for him on a purely intellectual plane. If ever he alluded even faintly to Allied victories, he would immediately assert that the Allies were losing the *real* war: "Quite apart from military operations, from the results of any military operations that may occur, the American people appear to have suffered crashing defeat, at the hands of the financiers." Similarly of Britain: "Some people fear NOT

[9] A story circulated in the late 1940s that at some time during the War, Ezra went to Berlin and met Hitler. Isaiah Berlin, who was in America during this period, says he heard that such a meeting took place and that Ezra "did not like [Hitler] at all"; but Berlin is inclined to dismiss the story as "pure fantasy", and there is indeed no evidence to support it. If it had actually happened, Ezra would have been unable to keep quiet about it, while Dorothy, an admirer of Hitler who would have seen little reason to cover up such a visit, categorically denied that it had ever taken place.

The story of the Berlin trip has been given some credence by E. Fuller Torrey in his study of Ezra, *The Roots of Treason* (1948), but this is entirely due to a misunderstanding. Torrey cites as evidence a note in the Huntington Cairns papers in the Library of Congress, which he alleges records that Ezra was "invited by the German Press Association to give a lecture on "the principles of Italian Fascism . . . [in] Berlin in April 1942". In fact, the note in question is a transcript, made by Ezra for Cairns, of an account by Camillo Pellizi, describing a lecture Pellizi gave under that title in Berlin during that month. Ezra took it from Pellizi's book *Una Rivoluzione Mano*.

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the outcome of the war, but the END of the war. Churchill, for example . . . sees the end of monopoly and privilege when the war ends, no matter HOW."

And of American advances in North Africa in the spring of 1943: "I think quite simply and definitely that the American troops in N. Africa, all of 'em ought to go back to America: IF they can get there." (It was the nearest he came to inciting mutiny.) In May 1943 he criticised the USA for "the bombing of civilians, the sinking of hospital ships", and "vandalism" towards monuments and works of art.

Mussolini's downfall came when the Allied bombing of Rome began on 19 July 1943. For some time those around him had begun to despair of his mental condition. He was still talking about victory being round the corner, but was unable to explain how he thought it would be achieved. On 24 and 25 July the Grand Council met and voted to disband the existing structure of government; Victor Emmanuel III, still King in name, informed *Il Duce* that Marshal Badoglio would take over as Prime Minister, and Mussolini was arrested. The new Government immediately tried to begin peace negotiations with the Allies.

On the day after Mussolini's deposition, Ezra Pound was indicted for treason in Washington.

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The Pug-Mill

At his age, he must know what it is
to have hands of clay and a child looking on.
A life by dug-out light under the hillside,
he has copied so often the one

thought baked in the bones of his wrist, there's
no obvious excuse for stopping now, so long
as there's a next there's no last. I am this child.
I watch Mr Prisk raise his left hand

eye-level (his own) as high as where
a bit of unweeded green light leaks beneath
a punky window-sash and pull on the rope's
knotted end. Up above in the sun

his horse hears the bell and stumbles out
of a doze into the collar and begins
orbiting the pug-mill, plods a muddy zodiac
which in its turn turns. Clotted clay buries

the workbench again. With palping palms
he stuffs his mould, that's one more circle squared, one
more brick the desert will keep. A contribution.
Its damp six faces sparkle dully

because of the sand which helps them slide
out whole into the system we inhabit here.
Is there anything outside? The hillside steepens
till baffled it stops, this way by blue

air that way by blue water, a third
which escapes between I'm running barefoot home
Corsair Bay, Flea Beach, pines of the town Domain
past the burned-out house with one dead brick

chimney standing. They are asking *Where-
ever have you been*? I tell them *Helping Mr Prisk*.

Allen Curnow

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Katherine Govier

The King of Siam

JANE IS IN PARIS when the news comes: her mother is dead in the apple orchard in the Okanagan, where she and Jane's father have retired, supposedly at peace. And Jane remembers her mother dancing. Not with her father, Saturday night in the living-room, after a discussion about how much hip she could use in the rhumba, him leading, driving her with both shoulders as one would a wheelbarrow. "That much, no more", he ruled. Her slim hip poked out, he put it back in place, a stern man with a measuring eye.

"Here I go with my best foot backward", her mother would say, waggishly, because the man always led, and his forward steps made her step out behind. No, that is not what she remembers, but her mother, dancing alone, weekday mornings, letting loose, elbows pumping, her mouth a soundless smile. She looks like Mary Martin. The words she sings are Mary's: "I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair. . . ." The record spins in the dusty-bright air.

The house glares, the cloudless sky and the flat, snow-whitened lawns and streets bounce sunbeams through the picture-windows. The beams explode geometrically again and again on motes of dust in the dry inside air, creating a painful brightness in all directions. Alone with the smallest child when the others have gone to school, her mother walks around in the forced-air heat with narrowed eyes, sometimes shading her brows with a forearm. The beige curtains are closed, filtering the light which can take two shades out of the upholstery in one season.

The house is a lightbox, her mother has two dimensions, like a cardboard bear on sticks. The records are old ones in small jackets, the songs simple, like rhymes.

"Oh what a beautiful morning, oh what a beautiful day, I've got a wonderful feeling, everything's coming my way."

Every morning it is the same. They have things to do. They will just put on a record while they work. They listen a few minutes and pretend to dust or sort tea-towels, but inevitably they are seduced. First, certain pieces of furniture have to be moved, his stuffed footstool and the glass-topped coffee-table with the three cones for legs. Then the choice—*Brigadoon*? *Carousel*? *The King and I*? They take off their shoes.

They are dancing. Not with each other, no, they move off into separate orbits, there in the veiled brilliance of the living-room. Socks on the pink-beige carpet give shocks if they bump, each other, or the velvet chair. In the hall mirror, bits of them arc, also through the glass of the picture-frames. Cheap clichés these movements, but wildly sincere: stops, postures for the benefit of the audience beyond the curtains fluttering over the forced-air vent. The arched eyebrows, hands on knees, bug eyes that entertaining ladies make. The faces out of which such words come:

"I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair, and send him on his way!"

Or the supple, breathy swaying, mouth slightly open.

"One enchanted evening, you may see a stranger, you may see a stranger, across a crowded room. . . ."

The room where such events may happen is somewhere else. But somewhere else is a place, a place you can get to. If you just keep going, going . . . until it is not Jane, but just her mother dancing, Jane watching. Her mother fabulous and strong, her mother tough and funny. Her mother, the light, the music. And Jane knows a kind of peace, almost holy. That peace is given to her only once again, in another place, far away.

WE ARE TALKING about the '50s, in the west. A growing city with a university, an industry; a small box house on a too-wide street; her father working out of town on the oil rigs. The Oil Capital of Canada! Gateway to the North! But outside its boundaries, nowhere. West, but not coast, flattish, but not prairie; that was farther south. The American term "mid-west", conjuring visions of cornfields, did not apply. They call it parkland, but there were no parks, only a place where they sometimes went to see a herd of captive buffalo. During the gold rush, the McKinley expedition embarked for the Yukon from here, lost its way, and all one hundred and twenty-eight persons perished.

And there was the river, muscular, army-green, so wide it would lead Jane, years later, to scorn the Seine for puniness. The North Saskatchewan's deep valley cut an S through the city, curling below Lolly Bacon, the treacherous toboggan hill, running straight under the High Level Bridge (one of the Seven Wonders of the World!) and looping the hill where stood the giant

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blue-roofed railway hotel. Then it straightened out to pass the refinery, its scaffolds, arms and towers, when lit at night, a fairy castle, and swept east, toward everything else.

In summer, the family walked alongside the river, on a narrow path by the Outdoors Club, watching out for quicksand. In winter, her father and the boys skied, on long, light planks with leather lace-up boots. Jane stood by the back-door looking after them down the path. On either side the heaps of snow were piled over her head; she was too small to go out. Later, she went along, but she was clumsy and fell, and they were impatient.

Winter lasted from October to May. They were farther north than any other city of size except Moscow. And Moscow, in the '50s, was the dark side of the moon. In the depth of winter, the sun didn't come up until nine, and it was setting by four. Strange it was not the dark she remembered, but the light. Winter days were dazzling: a clear sky and diamond sun on the packed, dry snow, snow-blindness as common as frostbite. And her mother dancing.

THE RIGS went south and so did they. Her mother's eyes went down, her back began to stoop. Something was wrong. Her mother seemed the victim of some terrible disease, eaten by things she wanted to be, or do, and couldn't. She never danced alone, only with him, her father, and it was just obedience. He worked in an office by then.

By the time her father comes home, her mother is trussed with an apron, hands sticky with flour and water, facing into the corner where the sink is. It is a fascinating corner; the mouse is said to live in the back of the cupboard. Jane feels kin to that mouse: she was a mouse in her dance recital, and her father calls her mouse. There are windows above the sink, looking into the backyard, at the flowering crab-apple tree which the waxwings visit in winter. Probably Jane is drawing at the table, invisible behind the door when her father pushes it open.

"Hi, honey."

He comes up behind her and slaps her bottom. Her mother stiffens. Turning her face toward him for the kiss, but keeping the chin down.

"My hands", she says, excusing herself. He opening the cupboard doors, taking a glass down with a hard clink, banging the door shut again, opening and shutting the refrigerator noisily. His movements square, angry. He is already on his way back to the den, where he will sit and read the paper "in peace". Halfway down the hall his voice is louder.

"Kids out again?"

Her mother turns, whispers. "Go see your father. Talk to him."

She rises, looking down at her colouring-book. The only thing that makes this bearable is that they are working together, mother and daughter. She knows she is an offering to forestall a perhaps inevitable wrath.

"Dad?"

"Is that you, Mouse?"

Still standing outside the door, not moving until requested to.

"Come in."

She pushes open the door. His feet are closest to her, in socks, wide, almost square feet, with toes that arch and curl as if by their own inclination on the footstool. He is behind these feet leaning back in the armchair; the paper is folded in his lap. He has put down the paper. Now she must entertain.

She is invited up close, to sit on his lap. He gives her a rough hug; she ducks his face because of the scratchy whiskers. His head is like a bullet, his neck thick and pocked. Everything about him is strange and threatening. She is perched there when another faint tap comes on the door. Her mother, without the apron, with clean hands. There is a discreet change in his voice and he sits up. "I have work to do, girls." They both slip out.

He doesn't want music on, music disturbs him at this hour. As dinner cooks, Jane studies the record album. *Anna and the King of Siam* in sunset colours, before the flock of little round-faced children with blue-black hair.

"Shall we dance, on a bright cloud of music shall we fly? Shall we dance, shall we then say goodnight and mean goodbye?"

Anna was a beautiful, gentle woman who went to a strange land to look after the children. They were the King's children, not hers. The King was bald and mean, with blazing eyes and a very straight back, like Jane's father. He had unpredictable rages, he even put people to death, if they displeased him. He was a savage, a brute. But Anna fell in love. Jane cannot understand what Anna sees in the King. And why did Anna go there in the first place? Reading closely, Jane discovers that Anna had another love, her true love, who died. Perhaps this was the case with her mother.

AT FIVE-THIRTY her father calls out of his door about dinner—is it almost ready, or does someone want to get him another scotch? Jane is sent to retrieve his glass. He has seated himself, by this time, at his desk and is working with a pencil and a ruler on large sheets of squared paper which roll up at the corners. She takes the glass to her mother, who pours more scotch in it. By the time she reaches his door it happens. He cannot find his gum-eraser.

"Nona! Nona!", he roars.

Now Jane is in the hall outside the door, and can see them both. In the kitchen her mother's head, ever ready for alarm, rising up like some deer's on hearing distant gunfire. She pushes in the drawer where she is counting out table-napkins. Jane hates the panicky, hobbled sound of her mother's heels.

"What is it, dear?" Sweetly, nervously.

"Who's been in this drawer? I told you not to let

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the kids at my things. Now I can't find my eraser."

"I don't think they have been. I've told them so many times."

Jane shrinks in the background. Has she taken the eraser? The accusation is so strong she thinks she must have.

His drawer slams.

"Oh, what's the point?" (bitterly, bitterly) "I can't get anything done around here."

After eating, in silence, he pushes back his chair and announces that he has to go back to the office. Jane and her mother do the dishes together. After, her mother finds the eraser in the drawer, under a pile of envelopes. She reads *Winnie the Pooh* to Jane before bed and she laughs, very hard, about Tigger falling down the well.

Jane lies awake in bed. Eventually her father comes home. His voice is still loud, and cross. Her mother murmurs, placating. They go to bed, in the room next to Jane. Jane doesn't want to hear the noises, so she sings to herself.

"Or perchance, when the *last leetle star* has leaved the sky, shall we still be together, with our arms around each other, and shall you be my new romance?"

LATER THE FAMILY found little to recommend these cities, little to remember. They moved to British Columbia, and her mother became more bitter, more crippled. Jane went away without regret. She didn't like ties, didn't want a man, never thought about it. She studied art, as her mother wished her to, and went to Paris. But she didn't paint. As she often said, she had nothing to paint. She worked, when she felt like it, writing features for Canadian newspapers. Her pieces always had some Canadian angle; that was how she sold them.

The day she learns that her mother has killed herself, not just died, passively, but died, actively, by her own hand, all in the new blossoms of spring, Jane has lined up an interview with an artist. It is her father who telephones. Her father is sorry, he has been sorry for years, but he does not say so. Jane, who thought she had forgiven him, is filled with hate. All Jane can think of is his impatience, the way he beat her mother down, the way her mother shrank. She puts down the telephone. Then, because Jane is alone and has nothing better to do, she goes to the interview.

The artist lives in the sixteenth district. Jane travels by *Métro*, getting off at the stop he named, turns up a narrower street than those she's passed through, and finds his door with a tiny gold name-plate. He greets Jane sternly, and turns his back. In the sitting-room he brings a trolley, serves tea and madeleines (*à la* Proust, he points out in a way not convivial but instructive). The artist is prairie Canadian, and very good; Jane wept in the gallery looking at his pictures. He shows her more. They are painted in egg tempera and are of people in empty rooms, of light from two windows hitting a corner, or sun-glasses reflecting a flat horizon. She says she is from Edmonton. He has recently been back there.

"A terrible place full of awful people! And they all look just like you!"

The madeleines are crumbly and taste like dust. She mentions a few names.

"Oh yes! I saw him! He looks like he just came in from bashing baby seals. And the students! So lazy! All they ever asked me about was money. How much they could make as artists. Mind you, they were better than the faculty. Those people, they were so lost, so ignorant. A dreadful, dreadful place."

Something causes her to be polite, eager to please. She doesn't dare make her usual joke, that the North Saskatchewan is wider than the Seine.

"The only nice person in the whole city was a taxi-driver. He drove me along the river valley", says the artist.

"It's beautiful, isn't it?"

He glares and presses his lips together. "You don't know Paris if you think that any other city is beautiful."

Jane trips, stumbles from the staircase into the street, and turns this way and that in the crowded streets. The *Métro* station is not where it was. She discovers another. She stares down at the rails in the tunnel. She reassesses the man's paintings. They are unreasonable, relentless, unforgiving. There is a clinical coldness to them; now Jane sees it clearly. They have shown her things in terrible relief. She is looking at the dull shine of the train rail. She sees something move. It has the familiar down-tilted, pear-shaped body and scaly tail. The rat looks her in the eye. It stand up on its hind legs. It is three feet tall.

"I am rat", it says. She has never actually seen a rat before. There is a special programme for rat control in Alberta, successful to an extraordinary degree.

Jane screams, clamping her hand on her mouth. She begins to tremble. She is falling apart, and on foreign soil. The train pulls in to the station and the doors sigh open, with pressure. She enters the car with others. Parisians are so rude, they take the outside seat as if to dare you to climb over their knees to reach the other chair. She does. There is a boy sitting opposite. He has dirty, long hair and a huge Adam's apple. He leans forward in his chair, sensing weakness.

"You speak English?"

She stares straight ahead.

"*Mademoiselle*, you speak English?"

She does not answer.

"*Français*?"

She keeps staring, hoping to be taken for a deaf mute.

"*Mademoiselle*, you are American?"

That trips her into shaking her head.

"Not American, German, perhaps?"

The other passengers find this amusing. The young man slurs and leans, perhaps he is on drugs, he does not

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seem to be drunk. He puts his hand on her knee. He keeps asking her where she is from, he lists half the countries in Europe, but he really thinks she is English-speaking, and returns compulsively to "America, America". She shrinks in her seat. She is afraid to push him away, to push his hand off her knee; she thinks then he might leap on her.

The man who would not move over is watching. He cocks an eye as if to say, "Why are you putting up with this? Why the hell don't you fight back?" Women smirk. No one in that crowd is going to help her. They are waiting for her to speak. She cannot speak. Why should she expect them to defend her, if she can't defend herself? The only thing she can do is get off. The next time the train stops, she springs over the man in the seat and out of the door. People are laughing behind her. The hollow station magnifies her shame.

Jane walks, runs, sweating through streets which are completely strange, not the Paris she knows. The faces around her are black; words from shop-front conversations fall around her ears like pebbles. The boy on the train has laid a curse on her: she understands no known language, she comes from nowhere. She carries on like that for a while, crying, while passers-by look at her incuriously or not at all. When the tears are reduced to hiccups and shudders, she realises that she is hungry and gathers her courage to enter a little restaurant. There at last, coffee before her, she becomes calm. She sits a long time.

THE MAN at a table by the window looks like a student philosopher-king Jane has seen in the newspaper. He is very dark, with a beard, and a long, bony nose, narrow eyes. She looks past him at the street and recognises a certain hare-lip newspaper vendor: there is the passage she calls Avenue des Crottes, around from that must be Place St Sulpice. She has made her way back somehow to "her" Paris. She smiles at her empty cup. She lifts her eyes. He is gazing at her.

They leave the café together. He corrects her French as they climb five floors to his room. As if he cares, as if he has been asking, she tells him she is from Canada. He is disappointed. He is crazy about things American: "baskets", which turn out to be track shoes, and Broadway music, *West Side Story, South Pacific*. He has all the records. And a bottle of wine.

Now Jane is angry, raging. The sun is going down, pale peach beyond the gummy grey windows. She realises that the light is wrong, there is a film on everything, the dirty air, the dusty desk-top. She cannot see clearly, she must be able to see. He plays records one after another. *Camelot, My Fair Lady*. Then, *The King and I*. She begins to sing the words. He knows them too, but not what they mean, he tests them in his mouth like unfamiliar candies. He rubs her nipples, hard, and they undress. His body is long and narrow and dark, with a rectangle of hair like a flag on his chest. When they make love, he is making love to America, but she doesn't care.

They smoke some stuff and afterwards, she gets up to dance, putting on his shirt. The philosopher—she doesn't even know his name, but somehow he is making all this possible—focuses a reading-light on her. Tears slide over her cheeks, down her throat. By then she is drunk and stoned enough to forget about the terrible boy on the *Métro*, and the upbeat story she will have to write about the nasty artist; but not about her wasted, horribly dead mother, who has now turned into an ache running from the base of her rib on the left side right into her neck, a stab wound.

But Jane does not stop, she keeps on and she has all the moves, the snap wrists, the jammed-out hip, open mouth and fake innocent eyes; she is all those saucy heroines. Her feet slip on a dirty Greek rug. She is Nona, in the '50s, Nona in her lip-synch revolt.

"Oh mother, mother, mother", she cries. It is all right to do it; the French understand these things. Didn't de Beauvoir write that Sartre himself cried out for his mother in sleep? She cries and she lets loose and she keeps going . . . until . . . it visits her again, that feeling of having no edges, nothing to defend, nothing to fear, that only-one-word-for-it peace from when she was four, or five, in the living-room, watching her mother dance. And this peace is the gift, not the emptiness, not the ticket to leave. There was love, before the awfulness. And Jane too may find it. She may even find it with the King of Siam.

Untitled Poem

The hill where we are strolling lies in shadows
The far one there is woven into light
The moon upon its delicate green meadows
Appears just now a little drift of white.

The roads into the distance growing pallid
A whispering bids the wanderers to stay
Is it from higher up, an unseen rillet
Is it a songbird's babbling lullaby?

Two darkling moths who prime the evening hours
Pursue their merry chase from leaf to leaf . . .
The ridge exhales from shrubbery and flowers
The haze of evening for a muffled grief.

Stefan George

Translated by B. K. Ngabwe

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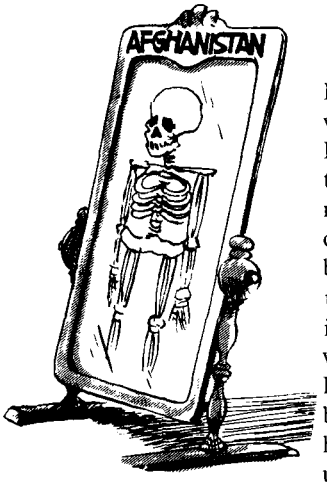
Radek Sikorski

Coda to the Russo-Afghan War

A Correspondent Reports



OVER THIRTY bodies had already been dug up when I arrived. Forty more inhabitants of the village were still missing. Dozens of men were digging through the ruins of several mud-brick houses which had collapsed in the blasts from bombs dropped by Soviet jets that morning. I looked curiously at the few remaining walls poking from the rubble. Pieces of curtains made of bright purple satin were still hanging on them, their colour unfaded. In the few surviving niches stood chests and primitive household gadgets—sets of glasses for tea, and tin plates. In the destruction, I was gaining an impression of the interior of an Afghan house from which strange men are normally barred. Kitchen utensils, broken frames with photographs, mats and blankets, all kinds of convulsed junk cracked under my feet or peeped out from heaps of wreckage.

Suddenly, there was a commotion. One man, in a white turban and a scarf tied round his mouth giving him the appearance of an old-fashioned burglar, was waving to the others; and they all started digging furiously in the mountain of dust where he thought he detected some movement. We all crowded round. Yes, there was definitely something alive inside the pile. There was squeaking and the earth seemed to move inside. The men threw away their wooden shovels and grabbed at the earth with their hands. They cleared several layers of dust and a living creature emerged, but it was not a human being. Crumpled and scared out of its wits, a cat curled up and scurried away from the sunlight. People were not so lucky. The civilians in this area had not recently been bombed heavily, and they did not realise that the best protection from bombs lay in ditches in the fields. Instead, they ran into the cellars of their houses. When the fabric of these impressive-looking, but fragile mud structures disintegrated from the explosions, they were trapped inside, suffocated under tons of rubble.

I had seen the bombs that killed them. They had been released that morning above my head. I heard the planes approach flying along the valley of the River Hari. They were high; but I saw the tiny objects, gleaming in the sun like sparks, detach themselves from the undercarriage of the jets and plunge towards the earth. With the momentum of flight they were carried past us and hit the next village. Huge pillars of smoke rose above the greenery of the fields and slowly merged into one gigantic mushroom, towering above the valley. After a minute the shape was lost in the wind. The mountain of smoke and dust dissolved into the air, dimming the sun, as in an eclipse.

THIS WAS NOT the first air raid, and at the time I was glad of the distraction they gave. For security I had been shut up in one house for almost two weeks, after which I was physically ill from idleness, and the raids were the only good pretext to breach seclusion and run out. That morning, for the first time, we went towards the village on which the bombs fell as soon as motorbikes and an escort could be procured. We had to pass within 80 metres of a government post at the edge of the desert, but the soldiers inside must have been more scared of looking out than we were of being shot at, because we were not attacked.

I went to see the next house. The peasants were digging into the remains of a cellar, and just as we approached they must have removed a vital piece of wreckage, because the pile of dust suddenly subsided, revealing an extraordinary sight. In the niche of the cellar, under an arch which miraculously survived the blast, there crouched by the wall a veiled woman with two small children by her side. They were unscarred and their hands were raised up in the air as if they were about to lift themselves out of the rubble and thank the men for their

RADEK SIKORSKI *has travelled widely in Afghanistan, reporting on the guerrilla resistance struggle. His photograph in the ruins of a bombed-out village—three Afghans preserved in death, like corpses at Pompeii—won 1st Prize (Spot News) in the 1988 World Press Photo Contest. He was a student leader in the Polish Solidarity movement, and later educated in England at Oxford University. He has written for the London weeklies, "The Observer" and "The Spectator". His book about Herat, "Dust of the Saints" will appear next year.*

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rescue. They did not move. The children's clothes and faces, and the skin on their bare arms were whitish with dust but they seemed unharmed. There was no blood on them, but they were dead. The woman's delicate veil looked strangely appropriate, hiding her pained face behind a curtain of dignity. Why did she have the veil down, I kept asking myself? She would not normally have worn it in the dark cellar of her own house. When the bombs fell, and the dust from the collapsed rooms above them started filling up the room, did she realise that death was near? The women hide in the houses rather than run out into the fields partly for reasons of etiquette—they might be eyed by strangers when running through the fields. In her last moments she must have been stunned by the explosion and gasping for air. Did she, in anticipating her death and the uncovering of her body by the rescuers, pay her last respect to propriety by drawing the veil? The three Pompeian figures were pulled out, laid on blankets, and then placed on the floor of the village mosque beside the dead from the other houses.

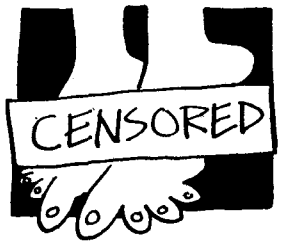
"Lyotchik", the Russian word for pilot, is much prettier than the technical-sounding English equivalent. By association with *lyetac* (flying), it expresses all the effortlessness and idealism of youth. I could not tell whether the pilots in the planes were Soviet *lyotchiki*, or Afghans. But the machines were Soviet: they flew in a Soviet formation, and from a Soviet-built airport. All the Afghan pilots were trained by the Soviet advisers who authorise all missions. This one achieved an impressive score. In one bombing raid on Kushk-e-Serwan in Herat province (on 11 August 1987) over 70 people were killed and 20 were wounded, four of them seriously. Not one of them was a guerrilla, and only four were men—unarmed peasants. The rest were all women and children.[1] There were no military targets in the village, and no guerrilla activity in the vicinity. The authorities must have known this from their numerous spies.

[1] According to the first extensive survey of its kind (by Dr Marek Sliwinski from the University of Geneva, March 1988), bombing is the greatest single cause of Afghan war dead, accounting for 46% of fatal casualties. Death from bullets follows at 33%, 12% have been killed from shelling, 4% from mines, 3% from exhaustion, and 2% are due to other causes. The report concludes that "the efficiency of aircraft against the armed groups seems to have been relatively limited"—on average, 80% of the victims of bombings are civilians.

My stay near Herat would confirm this. In the raid on Kushk-e-Serwan *all* the victims were non-combatants. During the two months I spent in the vicinity of the city, at least 300 civilians died on the eastern, densely populated side of the city. The western suburbs have been completely destroyed and all civilians have left (mainly for Iran). Despite the fact that we were bombed there several times a day, and at night, and shelled almost continuously, only one of the Mujaheddin was killed and one wounded over the same period of time. The resistance does not have many military bases which make good targets for aerial bombing. That is not to say that aircraft are not used with the usual Soviet sense of purpose: like every counter-insurgency campaign, the Afghan war is a political one. The bombings only make sense if their aim is to intimidate or force out the civilians loyal to the resistance.

I found the Afghans annoyingly stoical about death. They regretted the death of their relatives and friends, and they would certainly be taking revenge on the enemy for their loss, but they did not display their sorrow, did not despair. I envied them the assurance of their manner: bodily death was not the end of the story. Noon came and they prayed as usual: they bowed in a line and saluted towards Mecca. They emanated an untroubled certainty that pious Muslims killed by an infidel enemy have departed this life for their reward in the next.

How to Censor a War



The digging went on all day, interrupted several times by the roar of more jets. Every time their boom announced a new onslaught everybody dropped their implements and ran away in panic. But Kushk-e-Serwan was not hit again. Evening came, and the village buried its dead. Huge spears with multicoloured pennants fluttering in the wind rose to the sky from the freshly-dug graves, and a large green banner in Arabic letters proclaimed the latest sacrifice.

Over dinner the Afghans switched on an old short-wave radio, such as each village seemed to possess, and as in most of the villages I passed through, they tuned to the Farsi programme of the BBC. They heard the whole programme: the news bulletin, the commentary, the press review. Naturally, there was nothing about the carnage that morning. They turned to me as if surprised:

"Why isn't the BBC reporting about what has happened here? We hear every night about a few of your people kidnapped or injured, or having a car accident. Why don't they say what happens here? . . ."

This was not the first time they had been disappointed. None of the hundreds of people buried in the cemeteries of the valley—killed in fighting, shelling, and bombing—ever received the slightest acknowledgment from the Western media. It was not as if I were in some remote mountain valley. I was a few miles from Herat, the third largest city in Afghanistan and for decades a cult spot to Western travellers, scholars and military historians.

For once they had in their midst a foreigner, whom they took to be a representative of the omniscient institution which seemed to have a mysterious blind spot about their country. They had reasons to believe this because they had seen me recording interviews on a black device with a fluorescent orange sticker pronouncing "BBC" in the characteristic lettering.

"When I get back to London, I will make sure that the news is broadcast", I said. "In the meantime I need a precise list of those who died, with their names and ages."

I could not tell them how I came to be in possession of the BBC tape-recorder, or why the orange sticker was torn off at the corners. In one of the back rooms at Bush House, the BBC headquarters, I had talked to the chief of one of the

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biggest services broadcasting to that part of the world. After we had discussed what interviews and reports I might record, I asked him for a letter stating that I was engaged by his section to make them. In case I was captured I wanted to have some proof that I was a journalist, not a spy. I noticed that his index finger scratched vigorously at the orange sticker on the machine, which stubbornly refused to peel off.

"You take it off yourself", he said, losing patience in the end. "I don't want you to get caught with this [he pointed at the sticker] on you, or we might be implicated."

I didn't get my letter either. All I wanted was a letter confirming that I was doing what they had asked me to do (the BBC approached me). But, he said, it was impossible.

"Technically, you will be entering the country illegally, you see. It would be very embarrassing if you got captured. We would have to deny any official association with you. You see, we cannot get involved in such controversy."

I remembered that sticker-peeling finger for months because it surprised me—I could not think of anything which would bring the BBC more credit than having their reporters conspicuously giving witness to crimes which the perpetrators wished to keep quiet. I did not tell my Afghan hosts that the most famous broadcasting organisation in the world had not, in eight years, sent a single correspondent to report with the resistance on the war in their country.

THE BBC—both radio and television—has to be singled out, but not because its failure to cover this Superpower war has been more abject than that of others. On the contrary, its Afghan coverage from secondary sources has been consistently better, for example, than that of some supposedly quality newspapers.[2] It is just that the BBC is uniquely endowed to cover a war such as this from the frontline, and this it has failed to do. If the BBC, with all its prestige, will not risk a brawl with the Soviet or Afghan Communist authorities on behalf of a captured reporter, who can? Above all, if an organisation which does not depend on commercial income will not commit its resources to bringing news of a war which is expensive to cover, who will? It is cheaper to produce a programme of a given length about almost any other subject than to send a reporter on a long expedition with the Afghan insurgents. But this would hardly be sound reasoning for a commercial news agency which valued its reputation, let alone for a public service such as the BBC. There are, in fact, many BBC journalists who would like to make such an expedition, but are prevented by the policy of the institution.

"The top is worried that if we sent people to Afghanistan with the Mujaheddin we might lose access in Moscow", I was told privately. If that is the reason, the BBC have been party to censorship.

There is a genuine dilemma here which has nothing to do with fashionable BBC-bashing. From the start, the Soviet Union banned Western journalists from its side, concluding —rightly—that news black-outs do work. Graham Greene could not write a novel about a blasé journalist attending a press conference in Kabul, at which a Soviet general briefs the press corps about the progress of the latest offensive against the Panjshir Valley.[3] The journalists trying to cover the war on the side of the resistance are singled out for particular attention. All old hands will testify that bombings and ambushes are more likely if the Soviets suspect that a village or a unit is helping a foreigner.

"The next one we catch will be liquidated", said the Soviet Ambassador in Islamabad, after the capture and release of French journalist Jacques Abouchard in September 1984. The sentencing of the French photographer Allan Guillo in October 1987 to 10 years imprisonment, simply for doing his job, was clearly not intended as encouragement.[4] Well, one might argue, M. Guillo entered the country illegally—without the permission of either the Afghan Communist or Soviet

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[2] What is one to think of a piece of wisdom such as this: "If elections are held, the result might perpetuate the present régime (and with it the Soviet régime in Kabul). . ." in an editorial article in *The Times* (19 February 1988). The elections, which were eventually held on 5 April, were reportedly described as a shambles, even by East European diplomats in Kabul. The names of candidates were not announced until polling day, and the turn-out was between 5-20%. The article continues:

> "One of the reasons—perhaps the only reason—why there is now a real prospect of the Red Army leaving Kabul after more than eight years is because its presence there has been consistently and single-mindedly opposed by international opinion."

May I signal here the birth of a myth which, I will venture to prophesy, will in years to come gain the status of another false orthodoxy: that the Russians have bowed down to the pressure of international opinion. Not so: when the Russians withdraw, it will be because they have understood the language of guerrilla Kalashnikov assault-rifles and Stinger missiles, not of half-baked editorials.

There is also the story of the battle that never was, "reported" from rumour and gossip in Peshawar in most newspapers in Britain. Between mid-December and January, the Soviet and Communist forces were supposed to have fought a major battle with the Mujaheddin for control of the Gardez-Khost road. When the Soviets reached Khost, it was pronounced as their victory. It seems that there was no *major* battle there at all. If there had been, the hospitals on the Pakistani side of the border (Khost is only 20 miles inside Afghanistan) would have been full of wounded Afghans evacuated from the battlefield. A Western diplomat who made a survey of the hospitals at the time, tells me that they had only the usual flow of injured. Peter Jouvenal, the British cameraman, who arrived in the vicinity of Khost on 5 January 1988, the day after the Soviet column reached the town, has confirmed that there were few Mujaheddin casualties. The battle for Khost was fought out in the pages of the newspapers in Britain only because Soviet television condescended to show some artillery barrage on its screens.

[3] By comparison, during the Viet Nam war there were about 2,000 journalists in Saigon at any time.

[4] After he was sentenced, Kabul Radio said that he was carrying video and audio cassette tapes and "documents showing that he had collected military information". This is a fine new definition of a spy: it encompasses *every* cameraman or journalist traversing a foreign country at war.

In an interview from his cell with the Soviet newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, M. Guillo said: "My only arms in Afghanistan were photo and video cameras. What is wrong with that? It is a journalist's responsibility to come and see for himself" (*The Daily Telegraph*, 5 January 1988). *Komsomolskaya Pravda's* display of *glasnost* does not alter the fact that M. Guillo has been sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for pursuing the truth on his own initiative.

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authorities and against their express prohibition. This view, shared by the established media bosses, assumes a problematic definition of legality: as that which the Soviet or Communist authorities approve of. Paul Johnson put his finger on it when he commented in *The Spectator* (12 March 1988) that:

> "the West's press and television media accept the rules laid down by the Soviets far too apathetically. There is a long history not so much of kowtowing to the régime as of resigned shoulder-shrugging, nothing to be done, old man, you know what the Russkies are like."

If Max Hastings had been less lucky in the Falkland Islands—and on arriving at Port Stanley ahead of the British assault troops had been arrested by the Argentinians, flown to Buenos Aires, and then shot or imprisoned for many years—we would have been appalled. By refusing even to send reporters to Afghanistan because the prospect of a confrontation with the Soviet authorities is too daunting, the media institutions have allowed the whole profession to be intimidated.

WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN the media's response to such a Soviet posture towards journalists? Perhaps to send dozens of reporters inside the country with the guerrillas, so that the war could at least be monitored properly from the side of the resistances. There is nothing implausible in imagining reporters inside Afghanistan relaying stories to Bush House direct from the battlefield through small, portable, long-range radio transmitters. These are very cheap nowadays, a fraction of the monthly salary of a quango bureaucrat. With its excellent team of Asia experts, the BBC could provide immediate commentary and analysis of the events as they unfolded in the dispatches. It would have been an exciting programme to listen to; eventually the Soviet leadership might have concluded that it was in its own interest to allow journalists to do their job on their side, too.

Nothing has been done, either by the BBC or Independent News radio and television. Because reports about Afghanistan do appear on our television screens and in the newspapers, we do not realise that with the honourable exception of Sandy Gall (who made his films on his own initiative, and with free-lance camera crews), not one of the hundreds of £30,000 p.a. plus staff journalists of any medium in Britain has made a proper journey with the resistance inside Afghanistan. For a long war, in which a Superpower has been responsible for the deaths of well over a million people, this is a disgrace to the profession.[5]

As Jonathan Steele complained, newspapers have been relying largely on briefings by Western embassies, which are often unreliable. Invited by the Kabul authorities, Steele visited areas which he had been told only days earlier were under guerrilla control.[6]

"Why should we risk our staff going to Afghanistan", another BBC producer said, after a recent interview with me on the World Service ". . . when we have people like you going instead. . . ." In the absence of initiative from the established institutions, the war has indeed been a great opportunity for free-lances. Individuals cannot be in more than one place at a time, and they simply do not have the resources to collate and analyse information for an overall picture of a major campaign such as this. The result is that almost eight years after the Soviets invaded, nobody has a clear idea of the basic military order of battle on the ground. Paradoxically, we know more about the strengths and location of Soviet units, than about the guerrillas confronting them. This is not because such information could not be elicited—the war has been pretty stationary—but because the resources to gather the information are not committed. The basic homework has not been done, and the result is that we have no means of evaluating either the often inflated guerrilla claims, or the boasts of the Kabul régime. Such information would not only satisfy curiosity: wouldn't it be interesting to know whether the repeated claims of Major-General Najibullah, the Afghan Communist leader, that his régime can stand on its own feet, are anywhere near plausible? Can he survive for years without Soviet propping, or will he be swept away in months when they go? Our guess can only be uninformed, and this makes difficult any consistent diplomatic stance either towards his administration, or to any government the guerrillas may form.

The aerial massacre of the civilians at Kushk-e-Serwan was, in the end, described; a reporter happened to be there.[7] But how many such massacres have there been in Afghanistan which have gone unmentioned, consigned to obscurity, or at best classified by researchers in Peshawar as "unconfirmed by independent observers"?

The commentary on the Afghan war has been as partisan as its reporting has been impressionistic. Let's face it, it is a Soviet war, and our understanding of the Soviet Union can hardly fail to influence our perception of its role in Afghanis-

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[5] 1,240,000 (±15%), according to Dr Sliwinski's report. His wide-ranging enquiries lead him to a conservative estimate of 9% of the population killed in the war until the end of 1987. (The fatalities in the provinces bordering on the Soviet Union are higher, in the region of 16%.)

The relatively large margin of error for the absolute figure is due to the fact that the exact population of Afghanistan before the war is not certain—between 12 and 15.5 million people. This figure: 1,240,000 killed, mainly from bombing (46%), plus the statistics for the displacement of the Afghan population—33.2% in foreign exile, and 11% in internal exile—begin to reveal the extent of the Soviet genocide and devastation in Afghanistan.

[6] In "Bull about Kabul" (*The Guardian*, 10 March 1986), Jonathan Steele remarks: "The only beneficiaries, at least in the short term, are the Mujaheddin, and their political and military backers. Later on, the bubble might burst." And he might prove right. However, if the Mujaheddin defeat the Kabul régime, their strength and popular support will be vindicated. He could also have visited, with the Mujaheddin, the areas which the government claimed under its control; but he did not. Mr Steele is to the 1980s what Alexander Werth was to the '40s and '50s. His reporting and commentary has been consistently pro-Communist and anti-guerrilla. It has been pointed out that Mr Steele chooses to dismiss reports, for example, of Amnesty International, speaking of "systematic and widespread" use of torture in Afghan jails. But he apparently accepts Amnesty's findings when they concern other dictatorships, such as Chile.

[7] I wrote about it in the *Observer* on 1 November 1987 and 15 November 1987.

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tan. The conservative stance is not worth dwelling on because it has been straightforward and predictable. Firstly, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has destabilised a region which is of great strategic importance to the West. Secondly, although the Afghans are "barbarous" (to borrow a phrase from Peregrine Worsthorne), it is their country and the Soviets have no business in occupying it against their express wishes. In short, both out of self-interest, and to uphold the principle of self-determination, we should support the Mujaheddin.

Others disagree. In the *Mail on Sunday* (10 January 1988), Julie Burchill wrote: "The Afghanistan *civil* war (forget the Russians being an army of occupation — they were ASKED in, just like our American friends over here [in England]) is one of the few outside Latin America where the forces of light are fighting against the forces of ignorance." Ms Burchill goes on to explain that the Soviet forces and their Afghan allies are

> ". . . a bunch of basically decent boys doing their best against an American-backed band of religious fanatics doing their damnest to drag their part of the world back into the 18th century . . . . 'Russia's Viet Nam', to quote the most over-used cliché about the Soviet engagement in Afghanistan, is nothing of the sort. The main difference is that while Viet Nam was about a basically barbaric country (the USA) interfering in a very civilized one, in Afghanistan the positions are completely reversed."

The title of an article by Jonathan Steele: "How the Revolution Caught On" summarises this attitude. Yes, the backward people of Afghanistan initially rebelled against the reforms: "the first phase (of the revolution) under Hafizullah Amin, with its rush to change Afghan society and its prison camps and firing squads for those who resisted, had managed to alienate the bulk of the population . . . . More than a thousand mullahs are officially admitted to have been killed during Amin's rule, and it has been a slow process trying to rebuild the clergy's trust."[8] However, "since the invasion in 1979, the Soviet Union has worked hard to moderate the pace of the Afghan revolution, and to help it put down roots by becoming more acceptable to the population."

According to this view, in 1978 Afghanistan embarked on a social revolution, which was opposed by reactionary elements. The revolution, it is argued, was essentially a good thing—at least by comparison with the alternative—a Muslim fundamentalist régime of its opponents. However regrettable the presence of the Soviet troops may be, they are engaged on the side of the progress. Martin Walker wrote in *The Guardian* (17 February 1988):

> "The Afghan revolution has meant literacy schemes and land reforms. It has brought rural health care programmes, vaccination, schools, and a chance for women to break out of an essentially feudal social system, to discard the Islamic veil and to get an education"

Thus we have a new definition of what constitutes a revolution. Revolution is not something people do, but something that is done for them, and in which they might in time acquiesce if it "catches on". It is a transformation of society *against* the wishes of the great majority of the people by a ruler or a ruling élite, convinced of its mission to bring a superior social order. "Revolution" is in the eye of the beholder; it becomes a label which we can attach to any set of radical policies that we happen to like. In this case, "revolution" means rule by a régime which manages to gain power by whatever means and transforms the country in the image of the Soviet Union. However, since the death of Stalin, not even Communist propagandists speak about revolution in this sense. One doesn't hear any more of the "Polish revolution" or, indeed, of a "Czech revolution" as a description of the Communist consolidation of power after 1948.

The Old-New Régime

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, which took power in April 1978, boasted only 18,000 members at the time, and this was almost certainly just that—a boast. In truth, it probably had under 10,000 activists, though many of these were motivated officers in the Afghan army, trained and indoctrinated in the Soviet Union during the preceding decade. In all fairness, the murder of President Daoud and his family at the Presidential Palace in Kabul, probably involved more violence than the taking of the Winter Palace in St Petersburg in 1917; but it was still a low-key affair. The job was done by about three thousand soldiers. The reign of terror which followed eventually sparked off uprisings in all provinces of Afghanistan, an upheaval in which millions of people participated. The classic image of civilian mobs storming the bastions of a hated régime would apply to the Muslim insurrections following the Communist coup. These were about to topple the "People's Democratic" régime when the Soviets invaded to prop it up.

It is impossible to empty the word "revolution" of its emotive content. Some people never learn, and the dichotomy of "revolutionary" and "counter-revolutionary" is for them forever synonymous with "progressive" and "regressive", which in turn stand for "desirable" and "horrible". But this is precisely the point at issue. Was the brief rule of the PDPA before the Soviet invasion in any sense "progressive"? and are the policies which the Soviets have sponsored "historically" desirable? Is support for the Mujaheddin, therefore, a purely reactionary cause?

[8] After he was installed in Kabul by Soviet tanks, Babrak Karmal officially admitted that, under Taraki and Amin, 12,000 educated Muslims were executed in the notorious Pul-e-Charki prison alone. A conservative estimate for the number of victims of the PDPA régime before the Soviet invasion is 50-100,000. (Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan,* Cambridge University Press, 1986.)

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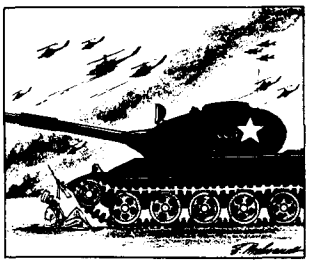
The PDPA manifestoes issued shortly after their capture of power, seem to indicate that theirs was indeed a progressive, if ambitious, social programme. Three major reforms were to be carried out: land was to be redistributed; women emancipated; and everybody taught to read and write. In the eyes of many in the West, these declarations have remained the fig-leaf of the PDPA régime, giving it a teleological or an ideological legitimacy. But, in truth, it is difficult to decide when looking at PDPA's early policies, at what to marvel: at how ill-informed and estranged from the life of the great majority of their countrymen the enthusiastic Afghan Communists were; or at how crass and ruthless they were prepared to be in enforcing their fantasies.

The land was indeed redistributed—without financial support for the new owners, who found themselves in possession of farms which they were unable to cultivate for lack of tools, seed, and fertilisers. (Items the landlords and the shopkeepers used to supply in return for a share of the crops, or provide on credit.) This may have been sheer incompetence; but, more probably, it was a conscious measure designed to cause artificial famine in the countryside as a prelude to collectivisation.

Everyone had to attend literacy classes, even respected old men and women, who were subjected to humiliations by the new breed of teachers. Girls and women were forced to mix with men—anathema to a Muslim society. With the teaching of the alphabet, the teachers peddled crude anti-religious propaganda and vulgarised Marxism.

IT IS NOT WORTH ARGUING whether this sort of thing constitutes "progress", even if such a brutal transformation of any society could be completed without repression and resistance (which have not once failed to materialise). What is remarkable is that otherwise broad-minded people in the West, who regard it as a mark of civility to tolerate cultural minorities, eccentric life-styles, and alternative diets, find themselves, in the case of Afghanistan, making excuses for an intolerant dictatorship which has exterminated many thousands of its own countrymen. They are aware of how many decades (or centuries) similar reforms needed to take root in their own countries, but will excuse haste and terror when it is to be imposed on others. Why should such people make apologies for tyranny when that tyranny emulates the Soviet Union? Few will argue today that the "Soviet model" has anything to teach our civilisation, yet it is deemed a desirable stage through which the Afghans should go on the way to a more developed society. Why should this be so?

A Muslim Alternative



THE REASON WHY some Westerners will excuse Soviet "bombing the Afghans into the 20th Century" seems to be that the only alternative to a Communist dictatorship is perceived to be a Muslim fundamentalist one which, it is claimed, can be just as nasty, and without the extenuating circumstance of forcing conditions in which future generations (in Stalin's phrase, "our children's children") might enjoy the benefits of the kind of society of which we approve.

Julie Burchill, for one, thinks we face an imminent confrontation with Islam and proposes that we "send out a crack division of the British army [to suppress the Mujaheddin] as a gesture of Anglo-Soviet friendship." This underlying antipathy is shared not only by people of her intellectual stature. An eminent fellow of All Souls, not a stranger to these pages, once told me that "when we have dealt with Communism, Islam will be our main enemy . . . ." There are at least two ingredients to our apprehension of Islam which are quite distinct.

1. Firstly, Islam is seen as an inherently expansionist and aggressive ideology. We may gloat over the fact that the Soviet Union has had a *jihad* declared against itself in Afghanistan; but we remember that Islam's holy wars have in the past been fought against European powers. The spectre of Dervish hordes posting General Gordon's head on the walls of Khartoum is as alive as that of Khomeini's "students" burning the American flag in front of the US Embassy in Teheran (during the hostage crisis of 1979). But despite the vivid imagery of many Quranic passages, the Muslim concept of the Holy War is virtually indistinguishable from the Christian idea of a just war: a defensive war against outsiders threatening the survival of the community. Like other religions, Islam is not immune from being used to justify crimes or legitimise conquest—Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico, differs little in this respect from Babur, the first Moghul emperor of India.

Indeed, what is remarkable is the relatively good relations we enjoy with the Muslim world despite two centuries of Western-Christian military victories, political interference, and economic supremacy. Of the many states inhabited by Muslims, the majority today are friendly to the West; and those that are hostile, oppose us because they have been drawn into the Soviet sphere of influence, and not because of their Islamic fervour. There is only one exception: Khomeini's Iran, historically and politically a *Shia* aberration and a reaction to the tyranny of the late Shah.[9] It should by now be clear that despite all the effort expended on exporting his revolution, Khomeini has only managed to gain significant influence over a few factions in the chaos that is the Lebanon. He seems condemned to building a "Theocracy in One Country". We often overlook the fact that it is primarily the other Muslim states that have contained him.[10]

2. Secondly, and more importantly, we are instructed to

[9] As Professor Elie Kedourie argues ("Despots of Islam", *The Spectator*, 27 June 1987) about Khomeini's Iran: "Such a doctrine [that the mullahs were the only legitimate rulers of the Muslims] had never been heard of before in the Muslim world . . . . Obedience to the Muslim ruler whether he was bad or mad, was a religious duty." And so it was in Christendom for many centuries; and it took liberalism, at its birth a free-thinking movement, to clamour for constitutional government.

[10] For example, at the summit in Amman in November 1987, "the Arab world placed Iran ahead of Israel as a threat to the Arab order, stability and territorial integrity" (Youssef M. Ibrahim, *The New York Times*).

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see political Islam as a regressive force. The subjugation of women, harsh punishments, and the supremacy of religion in public life, these are just a few archaic incongruities we associate with an Islamic order which Muslim fundamentalism is seen as promoting. The Western mind, no less than the Soviet one, believes that history has a direction. The world naturally tends towards a global secular society in which enlightened men and women worry equally about mortgages, health insurance, and the state of the ozone layer. The Muslim revivalist enthusiasm for revealed truth, eternal values, and the after-life is not merely jarring because of its uncompromising rhetoric. We cannot help but see it as a setback to the idea of "progress", and we feel not unlike a doctrinaire Soviet *apparatchik* contemplating a "reversal for socialism" entailed in the possibility of failure in Afghanistan.

Fundamentalism—the desire to return to the pure teachings of some creed—is nothing new, and it is neither a uniquely Muslim, nor an obscurantist phenomenon. Weren't Luther and Calvin fundamentalists? And so were Gramsci and some schools of Communist revisionism.[11] They were men dissatisfied with the way their faith fitted the tangible world, and who hoped to rejuvenate it by obliterating the fetters of traditional authority and interpretation. Is Islamism —as Muslim fundamentalism is coming to be known—so very different? My impression is that it is an attempt by secularly educated Muslim intellectuals to incorporate Muslim values into the fabric of the modern state, made in the hope that by means of modern political organisation, and professional education, both the Communist and bourgeois-democratic models of development can be avoided.

I FOUND IT a touching irony that the most vocal of the Afghan fundamentalists—Gulbadin Hekmatyar—boasts an engineering degree from Kabul University.[12] Whereas leaders such as Mojaddedi, Gailani, and Mohammadi—classified as "moderates" by Western commentators—have a religious following. Mohammadi leads the resistance of the provincial clergy, Mojaddedi and Gailani are *pirs*—traditionally respected hereditary leaders who also command the allegiance of sufi orders. Thus I found it a mistake to equate Afghan Islamism with religious traditionalism or the rule of the clergy. Most Afghan mullahs are deeply conservative and are apprehensive of any reforming aspirations. Islamism is a *modernising* ideology, and this is the reason for its appeal to educated Muslims, who believe that religion can be harnessed to mobilise the conservative masses for desirable tasks.

[11] And so is Mikhail Gorbachov, when he speaks of "more socialism" as a cure for the ills of the Soviet Union.

[12] In fact he only completed one year of the course. He was imprisoned during his second year: this still under the government of King Zahir Shah. It may not be too fanciful to suppose that his year of imprisonment might have some bearing on Hekmatyar's stubborn opposition to any involvement by the ex-King in any Afghan government. (See Hekmatyar's biography in *The Resistance*, a *Hezb-i-Islami* English-language bulletin, Peshawar, 1 February 1988.) In the same issue, the editors, in the worst tradition of totalitarian deceit, threaten Western journalists with unspecified "consequences" for expressing reservations about *Hezb-i-Islami*.

Defence of The Régime

JONATHAN STEELE *was the first British journalist to be invited to Kabul and articles from the journey appeared in "The Guardian" (17-19 March 1986). Mr Steele's articles provoked a lively response accusing him of bias (he routinely referred to the guerrillas as "counter-revolutionaries"); but he found support from Professor Fred Halliday of the London School of Economics. Professor Halliday proposed that:*

"There is only one viable solution in Afghanistan: that the Kabul government consolidate its position and the Soviet forces then withdraw. The West was prepared to recognise the Communist régime in Kabul when it came to power in 1978 and should be prepared to do so again. . . .

"A facile 'Troops Out' position is as pointless in Afghanistan as it is in Ireland. . . ."

"The Kabul government is not on the brink of collapse, it has gained some ground in the past year and the USSR is not going to abandon it" (*The Guardian 3 April 1986*).

PROFESSOR HALLIDAY *opposes the "facile 'Troops Out' position" and would allow the Russians to consolidate their stranglehold over Afghanistan although he also thinks that their decision to subjugate the country was a conscious one.*

"I do not share the view that the Russians 'blundered' in Afghanistan. They took a decision in 1979, the consequences of which they foresaw: they have paid a price for it but it was a price which they knew in advance they would pay."

According to Professor Halliday, the Russians regarded Afghanistan as within the scope of the Brezhnev doctrine and "were quite willing to sit it out". (See "The Middle East, Afghanistan and the Gulf in the Soviet Perception" in James Sherr (ed.), "Soviet Power, the Continuing Challenge", Macmillan Press, 1987.) Does he mean, therefore, that the Soviet Union cannot or should not be resisted once it has set its sights on conquering a country?

Professor Halliday's call for the recognition of the Kabul régime was somewhat futile in that Britain recognises states, not régimes, and in any case, diplomatic relations with Kabul have been conducted throughout the war.

INDEED, I WAS PRESENT **at a press conference at the Afghan Embassy in London in January 1987. A representative of the Kabul régime (in the supportive company of Ron Brown MP) gave a superb demonstration of the Afghan Communists' sincerity in striving for "National Reconciliation". The claim that there were 5 million Afghan refugees who had fled the régime and Soviet occupation was, he said, "a Western invention". There were no refugees, only some nomads whom the Pakistanis had maliciously trapped on their side of the border. This was asserted at a time when Kabul was claiming that the refugees were returning to Afghanistan in tens of thousands! Comment is sacred, facts are manipulable.**

R.S.

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"You must build a school and teach your children physics and biology", I heard Major Ismail Khan—an exemplary Islamist leader—argue with a group of villagers, "because the Prophet, peace be upon him, said that in pursuit of knowledge you must go even to China. . . ." Literacy and technical education, hygiene, modern medicine, and vigorous prosecution of the *jihad*, employing the most effective modes of organisation, are deemed to be desirable because the Prophet commanded so, and because in the long run they offer the only chance of building a political organism capable of surviving the onslaughts of non-Muslims.

The grandfather of the movement—the 19th-century scholar and intriguer Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, may even have been a religious sceptic.[13] He railed furiously at the "neicheris" (believers in Nature, i.e. empiricists and agnostics) but his defence of Islam was entirely pragmatic. "Man is very cruel and ignorant", he wrote, but peoples have inherited moral beliefs and "adjusted their behaviour accordingly, avoiding the evil and corruption that are the destroyers of the social order. . . ." Life after death was "the product of the hopeful human mind", but we need religion because it instils in us the belief in the Day of Judgment and "the habit of shame"—the foundation of all societies which is more efficiently promoted by religion than by a hundred stern laws.

Afghani argued for a non-literal interpretation of those parts of Quranic revelation which conflict with modernity; indeed he thought that the *Quran* could be demonstrated to promote railways and parliamentary rule.[14] "Ignorance is always subjugated by science", he argued, and "the father and mother of science is proof, and proof is neither Aristotle [accepted by scholastic Islam] nor Galileo [rejected]. The truth is where there is proof, and those who forbid science and knowledge in the belief that they are safeguarding the Islamic religion are really the enemies of that religion. . . ."

Afghani thought that "Muslim society has not yet freed itself from the tutelage of religion", which sounds like a paradox only if one thinks of Islam as strictly a faith. Afghani, Jinnah (the founder of Pakistan), and some modern Islamists have defined it as rather a "civilisation", which needs to be reformed in accord with its own political culture, irrespective of whether Mohammad truly represented the will of Heaven or not. Change needs to be promoted in the name of Islam, not primarily because the *Quran* is divinely true but because it commands the allegiance of the multitude, and because declared opposition to it provokes violent reaction. Moreover, Islam contains many practical tenets. (Unlike the dissident Nazarene, Mohammad was a successful ruler of an Arabian principality.) Property and private enterprise, for example, are sacred, and the faithful are enjoined to better themselves within the law.

After the Russians Go?

WHAT, THEN, of the threat that if and when "the Russians get out", Afghanistan might be taken over by the proxies of the Ayatollahs from Teheran? In place of a Communist Afghanistan there will be a fundamentalist one, just as inimical to Western interests?[15] If a "fundamentalist régime" signifies a Khomeini-style rule by the Islamic clergy, then I tend to think there is little chance of such a régime coming into being. Among the Sunni majority in Afghanistan, the Islamic clergy have the status of village craftsmen—it has no disciplined hierarchy such as the one which allowed Khomeini to consolidate power. The Iranians are resented for the way they have treated the refugees on their territory and restricted the resistance's war effort. Afghanistan is not a nationally homogeneous country like Iran, but a confederation of ethnic groups

[13] Afghani (1838-1897) was quite an unusual character: a compulsive liar, a traitor, and an megalomaniac of vast proportions. Like Bakunin, with whom he shares many traits, he was not much of a family man. When the Ottoman Sultan offered him a wife, Afghani threatened to cut off his member.

He lived an ascetic life and travelled in pursuit of conspiracies and schemes, managing to get himself deported from wherever he set foot. He claimed to be a Sunni Afghan but was almost certainly a Shia Persian. In the 1930s, Afghan authorities dug up an unmarked grave which one Turkish peasant claimed was that of Afghani, and the bones were buried with great pomp in Kabul. An excellent introduction to Afghani's thought is Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism* (University of California Press, 1983).

The claim that Afghani himself may have been an agnostic will be denied by Muslim scholars, but the tone of his famous "Reply to Renan" is so uncannily like that of a sceptical *philosophe* that I feel safe in making this supposition.

[14] Claims such as these were made by Afghani as propaganda for his programme of political mobilisation of Muslims for the pursuit of modernity, and he probably laughed at them in the company of acolytes with whom he allowed himself free-thinking. However, I was recently present at the "First International Conference on Scientific Miracles of Quran and Sunnah" (October 1987) in Islamabad, inaugurated with due solemnity by President Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan. Among several unusual contributions to the conference I was particularly struck by one from Mahmood Farhat which was apparently overhauling Einstein's theory of relativity. Farhat argued that speeds faster than light *must* be possible. His proof was simple: Firstly, "Speed cannot be limited because . . . if it was so, then it would take an angel descending from the nearest star four years to reach us, whilst Gabriel used to descend to the Prophet (peace be upon him) a few times a day." Secondly, speed in the universe is unlimited because "if it was limited it would have been impossible for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to ascend to the seventh heavens in seconds."

The epistemology for the new science based on the *Quran* was put on a firm foundation by Mohammad Amin Al Shaikh, who proposed the following rules of procedure, among others:

1. *Quran* covers all sciences and discoveries in general but not specifically.

2. *Quran* is always undoubtedly right. Human theories and hypotheses are not perfect and may be altered or disproved.

3. The interpretations of holy texts on which discoveries are based must be accepted by the scholars of *Quran* and *Sunnah* and not depend on the understanding of laymen.

So progress in human knowledge marches on.

[15] For example, see Thomas S. Arms "Afghan Vacuum", *The Spectator* (13 February 1988). Arms sees the Shia minority, which has been susceptible to influences from Iran, as the possible source of fundamentalist threat. But this seems unlikely; the Shias are a small and politically impotent minority of the Afghan population.

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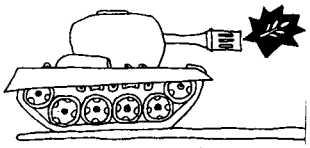
The Americans: Hoping for the Best?



Washington D.C.

THE RUSSIANS, *faced with military defeat, have wisely agreed to pull out. They are doing it pretty much on their own terms, designed to keep the Afghan Communists in Kabul in power as long as possible.*

The Kabul Government will probably be defeated one day. But before that day a lot more Afghan blood will have to be spilled to give the resistance the fruit of victory it has already earned—a chance to form a new government.

AMERICANS **do not seem to care a great deal. The major reason probably is that the withdrawal of Soviet forces is so welcome and desirable. It overshadows the fact that it will take place under conditions of Soviet choosing that can extend the war, not end it.**

And Americans know that there are powerful groups in the Afghan resistance that are totally repugnant to them—fundamentalist Moslems, who keep women in deep purdah and are eager to establish a Khomeini-type government.

But Afghan specialists believe that most Afghans are not fundamentalist and that a traditional Islamic government would emerge as the choice of the people and most of the resistance. The longer the fighting goes on, the deeper the sense of betrayal, the more the likelihood of a turn toward Iran and the emergence of an Afghan Khomeini.

THE RUSSIANS COULD *simply do what Americans had to do in Viet Nam—get out by getting out. But a formal withdrawal agreement is to be signed so the summit meeting needn't be bothered with Afghanistan. President Reagan still owes the "valiant" Afghan resistance fighters he loves to praise—and the American public—specific answers to specific questions:*

DOES THE **agreement ensure the removal of thousands of KGB agents, Soviet and Afghan? How?**

Will the thousands of Soviet specialists embedded in the Afghan Government get out too?

Who will run the huge air bases and intelligence centres built by the Russians?

Are Moscow and Kabul turning the northern part of Afghanistan into a Communist bastion from which to fight politically and militarily if Kabul is lost?

How much of a military stockpile is the Soviet Union leaving for Kabul? What economic resources will continue to flow to the Afghan Communists?

Will the thousands of Afghan children now in the Soviet Union be allowed to return home? When?

Precisely what are American plans to help the Afghan resistance win the one political goal for which they have been fighting for 10 years—the establishment of a non-Communist government? Or are we just going to wish them well?

A. M. Rosenthal
in the NEW YORK TIMES

The Russians: Preparing for the Worst?

Moscow

THE *Soviet Union appears to be preparing for the worst in Afghanistan after it pulls out its troops: a continuation of the guerrilla war there followed by the fall of its client government in Kabul and the flight of its key protégés.*

This is the impression given by commentaries in the official Soviet Press and by Mr Shevardnadze, Foreign Minister.

Western diplomats in Moscow say the Russians seem increasingly certain to quit Afghanistan even if the Kabul régime collapses.

The Kremlin still hopes that Soviet-Afghan economic ties and a new-look coalition in Kabul based on the present régime may allow Soviet influence to persist in a nominally non-aligned Afghanistan.

HOWEVER, **a commentary in the Government newspaper, *Izvestiya*, said there was "some (Russian) bitterness" over the Geneva Accords on Soviet withdrawal, and that, although welcome, they were "no guarantee of peace".**

Western diplomats think the Russians now accept that, whatever the wording of the Geneva agreement, US supplies will continue to flow to the Moslem rebels as long as the Afghan army receives Soviet weapons.

"They (the Russians) understand that", said a well-placed US source.

A REPORT *from Afghanistan published in Pravda yesterday said there was "a festive mood in Kabul, but no euphoria. People see that the situation in the country remains complicated".*

The press has also published a suggestion by Afghanistan's President Najibullah that returning refugees from Pakistan could police their own areas, and that government troops could, in turn, be "redeployed".

The thrust of these remarks, and details of recent assembly elections in Afghanistan, amounts to a franker admission than before that Kabul has lost control of large parts of the country.

MEANWHILE, **all weekend, Soviet commentaries, echoing Mr Shevardnadze's words, have stressed that the Afghan Accords should raise hopes of solving other regional problems, especially in the Middle East, where the Russians are now keen to resume a central role.**

Several Western diplomats in Moscow say there are signs that the Kremlin is distancing itself from the Kabul government, while emphasising an array of economic agreements which, the Russians hope, will stick—even if an unfriendly régime takes over.

The new stress is on improving influence with Moslem countries who opposed Moscow's Afghan intervention in 1979.

MR SHEVARDNADZE *said that the Soviet Union would give "every kind of support for the success of the national reconciliation policy in every field", including economic.*

However, his assertion that "the Soviet generals do not think they have lost a war", and that the troops "are leaving Afghanistan with a sense of duty done", sound hollow to most Soviet ears.

Xan Smiley
in the DAILY TELEGRAPH (*London*)

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in which politics evolve through extended family networks, tribal structures, and patronage.

Where, therefore, do the Communists and their revolution from above fit into the Afghan political spectrum? I find Western observers confusing and confused. Michael Fathers in *The Independent* (21 January 1988) wrote that "Mohammad Najibullah, Kabul's latest ruler, sees himself as a Social-Democrat." A year earlier (30 January 1987), the same commentator wrote of Major General Najibullah: "When the 1978 revolution—known in Afghanistan as the *Saur* (April) Revolution began, he moved to defend it, which at that time meant running a bunch of thugs, often student drop-outs, who rounded up anyone suspected of opposing it. . . ." Evidently Najibullah could give a new meaning to the leaning tower of social-democracy.

As for the emancipation of women,[16] or the separation of religion and politics, they seem to us clearly desirable; and we tend to think the quicker they are introduced in a society, the better. However, to the great majority of Afghans, these notions appear as alien importations advocated by a small clique of foreign-inspired fanatics. Through its rejection of not only the traditional tribal and conservative consensus in the polity, but also of the gradualist policy of reform, the Afghan Communists put themselves beyond the pale of respectable politics.

Near Herat, I interviewed a man called Abdul Satar who was a soldier in the Afghan Army before the Soviet invasion. His job was to go with the Communist activists to round up mullahs and potential leaders of opposition. These people were transported to a fort called Mahi Furos on the northern hills above Herat. He stood guard while bulldozers made huge ditches into which the arrested men, their hands tied behind their backs and their eyes covered with plaster, were thrown in and buried alive. He witnessed eight such executions, involving between 200 and 300 people each time. His testimony was corroborated by other eye-witnesses. Neither in their (by Afghan standards) ultra-militant political programme, nor in their ruthless methods—"running a bunch of thugs and rounding up everyone who opposed them" and systematically exterminating "counter-revolutionary classes"—can one detect the slightest trace of an inclination towards a measure of tolerance and compromise that their Western apologists would presumably like to promote.

But all this is really giving the Afghan Communist Jacobites excessive benefit of the doubt. Their position in Afghan politics, and in particular, their coming to power, is best explained in terms of a Soviet long-term strategic investment in Afghanistan, and not as an indigenous ideological product. True, not all Afghan Communists were *KGB* assets, and not all were converted in the Soviet Union. For example, Taraki, the first Afghan Communist leader, in the 1950s had served in the Afghan Embassy in Washington and had requested political asylum there (which was refused). Hafizullah Amin, his successor (who is said to have smothered Taraki with a pillow) gained an M.A. degree from Columbia University and reportedly became a radical after attending a summer work-study camp at the University of Wisconsin.[17] It is also true that the April 1978 coup may have come at an inconvenient moment for the Russians and was probably triggered off by the panic of Communist officers in the Afghan army. Still, the revolt was immediately blessed—once it succeeded.[18] Nevertheless, in an almost 100% Muslim country, a marginal sect such as the Communists would never have gained power except as the political tool of the Superpower which carefully nurtured it.

HAS THE AFGHAN ISLAMIST movement its fanatics too? Most notably Gulbadin Hekmatyar, a ruthless manipulator in charge of a disciplined party which evidently expends more energy on challenging its rivals in the resistance than on fighting the Communist and Soviet forces.[19] It is from his hierarchical party and not from the traditional, consensualist clergy that the main threat to Afghan social order and freedom might arise when the Soviets get out. This would be nothing new. As Professor Kedourie has argued,[20] it was the imposition of European technical and bureaucratic methods of government on Muslim societies in the 19th century which enabled Muslim tyrants to commit their greatest excesses.

Similarly, it is because Gulbadin Hekmatyar has grasped the benefits of a highly centralised Leninist-type organisation that he might pose a threat to the other more numerous but consensual parties. Hekmatyar's *Hezb-i-Islami* is a vanguard party, personally obedient to him, not a mass movement like the other resistance groupings.

The vital question is this: Why, despite the feeble military

[16] Pre-Communist Afghanistan started producing a new generation of women doctors, teachers, and even engineers. In neighbouring and Muslim Pakistan, the best known opposition politician is Benazir Bhutto. And even in rural provinces of Afghanistan I conversed freely with women past child-bearing age. In their old age, Afghan women are the arbitrators in matters of tribal honour, and derive power and respect from their dominant role in arranging marriages. I had a heretical Western thought: didn't they seem to me to be happier, wiser, and more dignified human beings than many a Western sexagenarian after a successful face-lift and several spells at a health-farm?

This is not to say that women in Afghanistan are not disadvantaged, only that some methods of forcing reform are worse than the original suffering.

For a sensitive and thoughtful look at this, see *Three Women of Herat*. By VERONICA DOUBLEDAY. Jonathan Cape, £12.95. Mrs Doubleday adopted the *purdah* and criticised it. Most of the Afghan women who gave her friendship and hospitality have now been killed or exiled.

[17] See Thomas T. Hammond, *Red Flag Over Afghanistan*, Westview Press, 1984, p. 31.

[18] Evidence of a more direct Soviet involvement than has hitherto been suspected has now emerged. See, for example, *The Fall of Afghanistan*. By ABDUL SAMAD GHAUS. Pergamon-Brassey, £15.65. The former deputy-foreign minister of Afghanistan alleges that the Soviet Ambassador participated directly in the overthrow of Daoud.

[19] This may be more than a coincidence. His ideological pedigree is highly mysterious. Some sources claim that before becoming the black sheep of the Afghan resistance, he was actually a member of the Communist PDPA for four years. For an assessment of his destructive role see Rosanne Klass (ed.), *Afghanistan: the Great Game Revisited* (Freedom House, 1987), pp 394-396.

[20] Elie Kedourie "Islam Today", in *The World of Islam* (Thames and Hudson, 1976).

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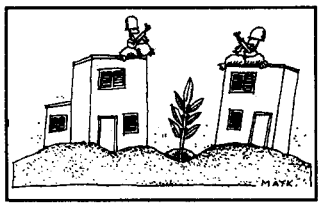
effectiveness of his party and its proven record of unreliability and ruthlessness, does it receive a disproportionately large share of the 700 million dollars of American aid (around one third, according to some sources)? The answer lies partly in Gulbadin Hekmatyar's flamboyant anti-Soviet rhetoric, which goes down well in Washington, and partly in his links with Pakistan's fundamentalist *Jamaat* brotherhood. Hekmatyar's party is the only one with tight internal discipline. This has for a long time impressed the CIA; it is only now becoming apparent to them that his democratic-centralist organisation expends more energy on competing with its rivals in the resistance than on fighting the Soviet occupation. This dangerous zealot is not representative of the resistance as a whole and the Americans should disassociate themselves from him, or they may find themselves burdened with responsibility for his future excesses.

I surmise that the Americans do not have their own agents monitoring the use of their aid inside Afghanistan and have to rely for intelligence on their Pakistani counterparts.[21] Many of these belong to *Jamaat* and are therefore likely to be sympathetic to Hekmatyar's ambition to take power in Afghanistan once the Russians have gone. Hekmatyar's men have been responsible for repeated attacks on Western doctors and journalists, and indeed, for the death of the brave British cameraman, Andy Skrzypkowiak.[22] The Communists in Kabul and Hekmatyar's *Hezb-i-Islami* are the only two forces capable of imposing a bureaucratic dictatorship on the country.[23]

However, the most enlightened of the Islamists—persons like Ahmed Shah Masud, Major Ismael Khan, and others—have not only proven themselves effective military commanders. In my view, their mixture of modernising zeal, combined with respect for established tribal, village and religious authorities, offers possibly the only chance of modernising the country without destroying its culture. The proverbial "schools . . . hospitals . . . roads . . . factories" can and must be built for the benefit of the populace, but with its consent; and with no foreign armies needed to protect them.

A Ruin



I HAD BEEN TO Sargah before. The lush valley in the central mountains must once have been an important metropolis. Among the greenery of the oasis, I found a 13th-century minaret with Ghorid brickwork, which could have been the remains of a *mussala*—a large theological college. Before the war, a precarious road linked Sargah to the outside world, but now a Communist militia post at Tulak blocked all traffic. The terraced hills were being tilled by oxen pulling wooden harrows. The locals had a Chinese 12.7 mm machine-gun, and a light mortar, with which they harassed the distant post several times a year. On a hill above the settlement there were more ruins which looked as ancient as that of the minaret: the foundations of mud-brick houses with only just enough fabric above the rubble to suggest that the their windows must have been rectangular.

I had been in Sargah with Ismael Khan when he appealed to the elders to start building a new school, but some two months had elapsed and clearly nothing had been done. I was returning from Herat without a Mujaheddin escort, having spent a month being fed and guided from village to village by the hospitable peasants.

"What was the ruin?" I asked a man whose meal of bread and sweet tea, his only sustenance, I was sharing.

"That was the *Woluswali* (the district office) and a school. We destroyed it and killed all the Communists."

"Why did you destroy the school?"

"It used to be a good school, but then a Communist teacher came and started telling the children that man is like a monkey, and that the *Quran* did not come from Heaven but was invented by the mullahs a long time ago. So we burnt it down."

"Don't you want your own school?"

"No, we don't. We don't need a school, Now we are free."

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[21] I have focused on the failure of Western media to report the Afghan war properly; but Western governments have also failed in important respects.

The effective *Stinger* anti-aircraft missiles were supplied to the Mujaheddin by the United States only in October 1986, apparently in the teeth of opposition from the State Department. (I saw the first batch inside Afghanistan; see the *Sunday Telegraph,* 2 November 1986.)

Above all, however, Western governments never launched a programme of accepting defectors from the Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Only a few dozen Soviet soldiers, up to the rank of captain, have defected. This was not because many more would not have grasped the opportunity to opt out from the genocidal war—but because the West would not, in the 1980s, accept them any more than it gave refuge to the "Victims of Yalta" in the 1940s.

If hundreds or thousands of soldiers and officers (up to the rank of, say, general) had defected, the Soviet will to continue the slaughter would have been dented much earlier.

[22] See my "Missing in Nuristan", *The Spectator* (9 January 1988).

[23] Hekmatyar has built up a fanatical following among some refugees in Peshawar. Unfortunately, one cannot exclude the possibility, indeed likelihood, that *Hezb-i-Islami* might launch a contest for power and plunge Afghanistan into a civil war.

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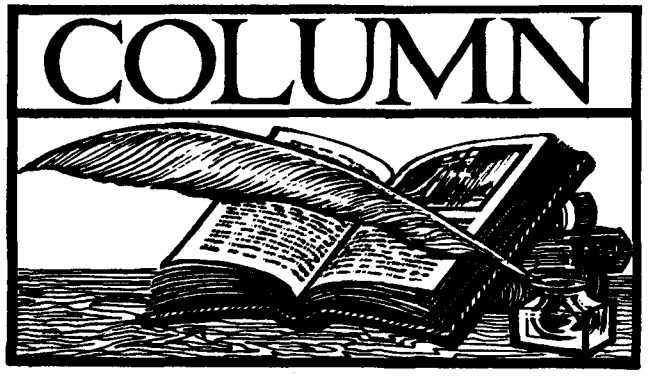

I WAS WATCHING television, upstairs in a darkened house on Easter Sunday, when I heard the most colossal CRASH! It came from the ground floor. I hit the light switch and raced down. The back-door had been kicked open, hard enough to break the metal keep of the night-latch. As I looked, the front gate clattered shut. When I got to it, the road was empty. Whoever it was must have ducked into a neighbour's garden. It was pointless to follow: there were too many ways out.

By Koestlerian coincidence, the programme on the box was *The Trial of Sir Roger Hollis*—yet another investigation of the twilight world of spies and counter-spies, "bugging and burgling all over London", as Peter Wright's memoirs had alleged. Its aim was to determine whether the once head of MI5 had been a Soviet mole. Various witnesses testified in a mock law-court, quizzed by what looked like real lawyers; a jury finally returned a verdict of "not guilty". In Scotland, might it have been "not proven"? My own, for what it was worth, was "not very competent".

But by fifteen minutes past midnight, when the programme ended, my thoughts were far away from MI5. I was still obsessed by my would-be burglar—or rather, by my own defective reactions. If only I had left the light off, not gone downstairs, and quietly telephoned the police: if only I had been quicker, quieter, more cunning. . . . It was literally *l'esprit de l'escalier*, like the repartee one thinks of when leaving the party. And there were also darker thoughts. If I'd caught up with the intruder, I'd certainly have attacked him. That would have been extremely unwise. Obviously, he was hefty: I say "he" because few women, if any, could have smashed so big a piece of cast iron. Possibly, he was armed —most likely, with a knife. So I could have been badly hurt: but that was not my chief worry. What really concerned me was what I might have done to him. Trained by the army to kill without weapons, and enraged by an assault on home territory, I could have done serious damage, and found myself in a real, not a television court.

TWO CASES STICK in my mind. One, some years back, concerned Spike Milligan, who was prosecuted for peppering some persistent vandals with shot from a firearm. The other, much more recently, was that of a respectable middle-aged collector for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. He was attacked on the London Underground by a gang of muggers—and wounded one of them with a sword-stick. He too faced legal penalties, although his offence was far less severe than that of the New York subway vigilante, who actually killed his man.

So there was good reason to be wary of confrontation; and what alarmed me, in retrospect, was the fury with which I'd sought it. The sense of outrage when some malevolent thug smashes the door in, not even caring how much noise he makes, intent only on destruction and theft, has nothing to do with fear, and goes beyond the reflex defence of one's territory. What really gets my dander up is the knowledge that such violence is becoming commonplace, and that most of its perpetrators go unpunished.

Part of the problem lies with the police. Understaffed, probably underpaid, and certainly overburdened, they are already having to specialise, concentrating on major, solvable crimes. Small domestic burglaries, especially if unsuccessful, have low priority and little hope of leading to convictions. Instead, citizens are currently being advised, in a torrent of publicity, to improve their locks and alarm systems, set up neighbourhood watch schemes, and engrave their postcodes on valuable goods. Do I smell a whiff of the Middle Ages, of castles and body-armour? Are we going back to Merovingian Values because the forces of law and order can't cope?

If so, why? What makes the 1980s so different from the 1930s? Then, few people bothered with burglar alarms. Housebreaking occurred: as a child, I even helped foil one attempt which I witnessed from the top of my favourite climbing tree. But that was one of only two such incidents in our neighbourhood over a decade and more. Now, not a single house in our street has escaped attempted burglary, and several have been attacked more than once.

Is poverty the reason, or unemployment? It hardly seems so: distress was far greater, and relief less generous, in the days of the Hunger Marches. Can we blame television? Perhaps: rough talk, rudeness, bad behaviour, violence, and cruelty are part of its staple diet, which also includes cheap pop glamour, youth snobbery, and the display of greed-inducing consumer goods. Even the news brings aggression into the home; and even wildlife programmes sometimes remind us that Nature, as Woody Allen put it, is a restaurant where the customers eat each other. Yet children's comics and radio programmes, in the dull golden age of Lord Reith, also contained unsanitised items; and anyone who doubts the reality of original sin in childhood should reread Saki's short story "The Toys of Peace". In that, you remember, well-meaning adults confiscate toy soldiers and replace them with civic officials. Soon, the councillors and dustmen are at it hammer and tongs.

One reckless police official recently blamed juvenile crime on mothers who go out to work instead of staying at home. The feminists spared his life, but only just. Whether a bored, frazzled mother would be better than a nursery school seems open to doubt; and some mothers I've seen cuffing their children on shopping expeditions seem to be positively training them in the use of force. What may be true, I suspect, is that more young people than before are now reared in comparative anomy—a term I've heard more often in France than in the UK. My dictionary defines it, with careful ambiguity, as "disregard of (divine) law".

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Rebellion is part of modern culture. In the arts, what Wyndham Lewis called "the demon of progress" bedevils the so-called avant-garde: shocking the last orthodoxy, itself once a shocker, is a perennial, ever faster whirligig, like rag-trade fashion. In politics, especially on the far Left, mutually antagonistic *groupuscules* proliferate like fungus spores; and even the comparatively herbivorous new Centre parties have split: they always said that they wanted to "break the mould". In dress and cosmetics, perfectly respectable young people disguise themselves as savages or 1920s prostitutes. In sexual ethics, even the grandparents of today's children were once beneficiaries of the revolt against Victoriana: only AIDS and cervical cancer play the restraining role once exercised by conventional morality and the fear of pregnancy or venereal disease. In education, finally, sitting in rows, learning by rote, memorising poetry, parsing sentences, and knowing multiplication tables have mostly been jettisoned for more interesting if not always more useful practices.

THIS IS NOT the lament of a *laudator temporis acti*, or a call to put back the clock. Even if that were possible, it would do harm as well as good. No: what all this amounts to is that in every case the rebel has the best tunes. He or she may be staging a mock-rebellion, like some Sloane Ranger punks; the rebellion may be ancient history, as in the case of sex. Never mind: except in expensive restaurants, country magazines, and Royal speeches on architecture, tradition still isn't trendy. By contrast with China, ancestor-worship is left to museums, race-horse breeders, and the National Trust. Overthrowing, outwitting, or ignoring the wrinklies and crumblies is one of the pleasures of life.

This makes things tough for parents and teachers, faced with the stony gaze of the personal-stereo peer group. What sanctions can they invoke against the culture of defiance, of which they themselves are a part? No more television? They too want to watch *Dallasty*. No latch-key? It'll be a slumber party, then. Corporal punishment? Pretty well outlawed, and probably counter-productive (see above). Divine displeasure and the fear of hell? You've gotta be joking. Oh, no: I'm not.

I don't mean, once again, that potential delinquents can be frightened into good behaviour by showing them Hieronymus Bosch pictures of fiends with red-hot tongs. True, popular teen-age movies make great play with demonic possession: our screens are filled with ever more ominous bosh. But titillation of this sort, although it uses the iconography of medieval and later scaremongering, is strictly for kicks, not moral tuition. Only the most timorous of viewers, or the most credulous, could possibly curb his conduct for fear of special effects. Supernatural sanctions, in fact, may be a lost cause except with the pious, who presumably don't need them. But I do suspect that the loss has had serious effects.

"Earnest atheists"—to use the phrase that Malcolm Muggeridge once applied to Samuel Butler—commonly maintained that ethics would survive the death of religious belief. The atheists themselves were mostly men of strenuous principle: that was often why they were atheists. Conscience

On May 15th 5,000,000 Afghan refugees started going home.

No food. No water. No roof.

That will be 'home' for millions of Afghans about to begin the slow trek across the high mountains from the refugee camps to their villages.

Half of them are under 15. A quarter under 7. They will have less than 4 months to rebuild their homes, plant and harvest their crops and find clean water. If they fail, more Afghans could die this winter than in ten years of war.

Yet £20 will feed a family for a month while they work. £100 will buy an ox to till the fields. £300 will buy a water pump.

Even £5 will buy a woollen overcoat which will save a child's life. We must help these people now. Later will be too late.

Please send whatever you can afford to: Afghanaid c/o Jackie Wray, 18 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0LT.

Name E/5

Address .....

.....

.....

I enclose £/$ ..... Tel. number for credit card donations: 01-836 9814 (Visa/Amex/Access)

Afghanaid

EVERY GIFT WILL BE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED AND WE PROMISE TO KEEP YOU INFORMED ON HOW YOUR MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT. REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 282353.

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made critics of them all. Some of their successors in unbelief, slipshod conformists following the *Zeitgeist*, had no such scruples. If God wasn't watching, and the policeman couldn't see, why bother? "If you can't be good, be careful"—the ethics of the saloon bar. Morality began to look like one of those cartoon animals that goes on running in mid-air after the cliff has crumbled. How long before the crash?

SOMEWHERE, in this debate, there was surely a role for the Churches. There may be still. Evidence of what many see as superstition—astrology, various cults, television evangelism —suggests immense religious hunger, a huge metaphysical void. If the cliff really has crumbled, plenty of jerry-builders are busy trying to shore it up. Can churchmen not join or replace them? For various reasons, it seems not.

In the purple corner, His Holiness the Pope. A brave, saintly, charismatic figure: but deeply, stubbornly conservative, seemingly indifferent to the fact that bad law makes hard cases, not the other way round. Divorce—contraception—married priests—ordained women—modern nuns—liberation theology: all clearly arouse distaste as well as doctrinal horror; and good men and women labouring in pastoral vineyards far from the comforts of the Curia have been known to greet some Papal pronouncements with a sad shake of the head.

In the red corner, so-called Christian Marxists—seemingly more works than faith. They may, like Marshal Pétain, think that they act as a shield between atheistic régimes and beleaguered believers: they may be good recruiting-sergeants, welcoming the huddled masses of the poor. But in some cases they seem compromised, perhaps forgetting that envy, too, is one of the seven deadly sins.

In the pink corner, the motor-cycling, pop-music vicars. Theirs was a gallant attempt to corral the youth culture with transcendental punk rock. Worker-priests in the slums of the spirit, they endured a great deal in a good cause: yobbo gear, junk food, instant art, a touch of condescension, and perhaps the occasional joint. They certainly scored some successes: but the cost was high. I put it in the past tense because, unless I'm mistaken, the movement seems largely to have petered out, at about the same time as flower power went to seed.

In the blue corner, finally, the established Church of England. Like the bourgeoisie, this tends to be sneered at from both above and below: Roman Catholics feel that it's schismatic, Nonconformists that it's corrupt. Its more sophisticated adherents therefore tend to seem defensive. Some are zealously trying to change it—in frankly alarming ways.

For many British people, absent-mindedly or half-heartedly religious, the Church of England used to seem a picturesque public utility—a sacred-musical registry office for births, marriages, and deaths. My mother, for example, although a firm believer, seldom went to church: those who regularly did she sometimes described as ostentatious. She had a private reason: her father, a churchwarden, had not in her view lived up to his professed beliefs. Public worship, for her, was no substitute for private prayer.

Church, then, meant occasional conformity: a carol service at Christmas, the joy of Easter morning, matins now and then. After I was confirmed, the family took Communion; but that too lapsed with the War. In the army, I attended Church Parade: since then, old lax habits have returned—although when sight-seeing I salve my conscience via the collection-box.

This pattern, I fancy, is fairly common. We use the Church for the big sacraments; we value its traditional language; we share in its major festivals; we intermittently attend matins; we admire its architectural splendours; we contribute to its funds when we remember. It's a pretty lukewarm relationship: but it's friendly, familiar, and real.

Then came the blasted zealots. The General Synod—usually pronounced *Sin-odd* on the radio to avoid confusion with "sinners"—started tinkering. Some tin-eared committee retranslated the Book of Common Prayer. "And with thy spirit" became, crassly, "And also with you". God, too, became "You", as if to say "Listen here". The Lord's Prayer became a hybrid, with only bits of pointless modernity to spoil its cadences. The "Alternative" Service Book, in many parishes, became the sole alternative. And the high-tech names for desecration were terms like "Series 3".

Now, at some churches, dear old comfortable matins are a thing of the past. Deprived of noble and inspiring language, we scrabble about through pamphlets written in officialese. But if this is meant as a come-on or concession to the unlettered laity, the service itself is the real hard stuff, strictly for professionals and true believers—the Eucharist, no less. It's like being offered Communion wine in a Coca-cola can.

I don't object to the ritual handshakes that usually follow these performances. The ordination of women, likewise, is long overdue. And churchmen, like all citizens, have the right to comment on politics—though I'd welcome more care and charity in their pronouncements, and in several cases a less namby-pamby voice. Change is inevitable in a living institution: it's just that recent changes seem mostly to have been for the worse.

Hence, for me, the powerful appeal of the Quakers, the Society of Friends. Their austere, humble meetings, in silence broken by prayerful comment, hold fast to essentials: the format never flirts with kitsch. In the United States, especially, I've attended meetings crowded with lively youngsters—no need for rock music or junk prose to haul them in. Nor, finally, can Quakers be assigned a corner, even the green corner: sparring, like all violence, is out.

And so, of course, it should be. Whether the Churches' combined efforts can effectively curb the climate of sullen hostility that seems to be afflicting us remains a moot point. They are trying, at least, in Northern Ireland. But I know, from my own violent fury when chasing a violent intruder, that we need all the help we can get.

M

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Graeme Wilson

Corinthian Poems

We would not have you ignorant, bretheren, concerning the misfortune that befell us in Asia. 2 **Corinthians** 1.8

Achinese in Jogjakarta

The singing starts as one long vicious cry,
Then the guitars break in. Deep ugly chords
From which the voices, like so many swords,
Lift with a shining fierceness to deny
The worth of this night-club-world they entertain.

The singers, gaudy men with mouths like gongs
Shaped by the pulsing menace of their songs,
Sing naked hate. Again and again and again.

Make no mistake. Beneath their flashiest grins
The hate is real: the hatred of the wild
Islamic world for the dead-heart of the West.
Those blue-rinse ladies downing double-gins,
Those bar-flies muzzy as an old-and-mild
Need the clean kris-blade punched into the chest.

Cholera Shot: Vientiane

The patients waiting for their cholera-jab
Sit in the courtyard on a wooden bench,
A church-pew long-abandoned by the French,
And, under attap-thatch, pursue their drab
Thinking of nothing. In a lean-to shed
Some erk prepares his needles. One by one
We shuffle through the furnace of the sun
To be injected.
Embassy had said
They use some Russian vaccine which has not
Been centrifuged, as ours are. The effect,
So they had said, is savage: when the shot
Enters your arm your whole damn body jerks.

In my case, I blacked out. What they inject,
Those Russians, God alone knows. But it works.

Conversation in Seoul, 1975

There are two divisions, first-rate fighting-men
And brilliantly equipped: who, when the war
Comes to its end, will then be looking for
Paying employment. We could use them then.

Available force. The troops will not be keen
To be brought back here. In these high-jacking days
A high-jacked State would scarcely even raise
One diplomatic eyebrow. In between
Viet Nam and here the targets seem to be
Hong Kong, Manila maybe, Singapore:
All open to surprises from the sea.

The first would bring in China overnight,
The next's too poor, but who would go to war
To help the third once we were sitting tight?

The generals wouldn't touch it. Colonels might.

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Shenyang

Official business first. Vast foundry-sheds
Where, in Dickensian gloom, near-naked squads
Hand-ladled molten steel with bamboo-rods;
And even vaster barns laid out in beds
Of concrete cracking under crude machines,
Old stuff, Hungarian, Russian, Polish, Czech
Which yet turned out, like treasures from a wreck,
Blue-gleaming engines for Mig 17s.

Next day, a special visit to the vast
Imperial tomb, acres of cedared stone,
A place so peaceful one could see at last
Some sense in killing to acquire a throne.

Why else, remarked the guide, had you supposed
Through all these senseless years we've kept it closed?

John Gohorry

Night Studies

Not many books in his chamber, ever, and those
for repeated use—*Homer and Virgil, Xenophon,*
or some probable history, and Greek Testament
or so—though, especially, for when he had gone

to bed, books of written music lying on his table
—his Tallis, his Dowland—and always, his Henry Lawes
to sing aloud (*not that he had a very good voice,*
but for his health's sake) behind securely locked doors

that he might not be overheard singing nonsense
—*In quel gelato core piagne madonna, tavola*
—*Doremi fasolati? Doti laso famiredo, soprano*
—or his Ballad of the whale washed ashore at Ancona

on Wednesday the fourscore of April last, certainly,
and of how sightseers came to see stranded leviathan
in its death-throes, the salt air heady with ambergris
and hyperbole, the beach loud with the admiration

of thieves, horseman, prospectors, and truant schoolboys
making up a newly-drawn probable Map of the whole State
of Mankind, which is both whale flushed from his element,
and the land creatures, short, brutish, degenerate,

hacking away at its ears. It is loosely engendered yet,
this allegory, not yet perfectly drawn, like a knife,
or a man locked away at night in his own small room
singing lustily into the small hours to prolong life.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from Budapest

Between Decay & Danger

By George Schöpflin

In its visual aspect there was very little change in Budapest in the 20 months or so since I had been there last. It still looked like a somewhat shabby, down-at-heel European city, reminiscent of parts of Rome or of Vienna in the early 1960s. Only the *Váci utca*—celebrated in a hundred Western television programmes as the symbol of the arrival of capitalism in Hungary or the token of "Buda-west"—served as a jarring note against a general picture of decay. But the European aspect is significant as well. Budapest feels indisputably a part of Europe, which is more than can be said for Warsaw, let alone Bucharest (currently being devastated by the megalomania of late Ceaușescuism).

The changes in Budapest lie outside the visible range. Before going, I had had a vague but strong impression that the political system in Hungary was undergoing such a far-reaching erosion as to merit the term disintegration. This proved to be exaggerated. The political leadership, though beset by external and domestic pressures of mounting seriousness, holds on to as much of its power as it can. Essentially, though at a loss for ideas and with its ideology and vision of the future largely exhausted, the leadership resolutely resists initiatives emanating from outside the magic circle of the upper reaches of the Party bureaucracy. It knows that this would represent a serious, and possibly irretrievable, loss of power.

The results are unmistakable. In all areas of political, social and economic life there is uncertainty. The leadership has ceased to lead, and remains only to block attempts by others to do so. The intelligentsia in the broadest sense is frustrated and has burst the banks of the Kádárist consensus that it has served (and served so well since the repression of the 1956 revolution). The population at large, faced by a steady deterioration of its standard of living, with no end in sight to this process, is increasingly shifting from dissatisfaction to restiveness. Whereas two years ago, complaining was widespread, but stopped there, today complaints end with the refrain, "Something must be done!" What that "something" might be, however, is uncertain.

In the leadership, the problem has overwhelmingly become focused on the position of János Kádár himself. His departure is almost universally seen as a necessary condition for change. He evidently refuses to recognise the urgency of the situation and continues to hold that the consensus he constructed 25 years ago remains sufficient to weather the crisis.

In March, the country was stunned to hear him announce on television that there was "no crisis". He must be the only person left in Hungary who is unaware of the real situation. The Budapest rumour mill suggests that he is not fully appraised of the reality of the state of affairs, that perhaps he is not shown all the data about Hungary's economic situation, because this would be too "upsetting" for a man of his age. Those in the know tell the story that two senior Party veterans visited him last summer and urged him to resign "for the sake of the country". Kádár's reported reply was, "What? and have them bring out the Rajk case and the Imre Nagy case. . . ." Like Banquo's ghost, Kádár's responsibility in the deaths of two former comrades has come back to haunt him.

Plans, projects, blueprints for reform are ten-a-penny. They almost all focus on the single most intractable problem of Communist politics. Can the rule of a single party be combined with pluralism, if not actually with democracy? No one expects the introduction of a sovereign legislature with a multi-party system, as was projected during the 1956 Revolution; but pluralism, involving independent, autonomous bodies—free of Party control—and the dismantling of the *nomenklatura* system by which the Party ensures that its placemen pervade all institutions, is now widely regarded as indispensable. The existing system is not just repressive and anti-innovative, it gravely hampers the functioning of the economy in any way that can be reconciled with the word "rational". Too many loss-making enterprises are protected by the political interests of managers and Party secretaries, who enjoy the power and patronage that continued infusions of subsidies provide. The only way forward, the reformers insist, is to "open up" the political system; the alternative is utter collapse, as witness Romania.

There is a certain broad agreement in reform circles that the most attractive way towards one-party pluralism is to reconstruct the Rule of Law. The existing system, and this applies to all Communist or Soviet-type systems, is characterised by the way in which everything is politically determined. The political system, which is controlled by the Party, has absorbed all other sub-systems—economic, legal, aesthetic, cultural, educational, even religious—and even where it allows the other sub-systems a degree of free operation (as, say, with medicine or engineering), it will intervene if any of these operations threatens political power. The solution is to make the system more competitive, to allow the conflicts of interest that exist in any society to have free play with recognised ground rules.

It follows, of course, that if the legal sphere is recreated,

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then the supremacy of politics will end—and movement towards the rational functioning of other spheres can be secured. In practice, this would mean that Parliament would acquire a measure of real power, that the government would become free from everyday interference by the Party, that public opinion would have a say over the way in which it is ruled, and that the law courts would act independently.

This is the principle underlying the proposals put forward both by the Party reformers and by the Democratic Opposition. The overlap between the two is striking. One leading reformer, a Party member (and one who insists on his socialist beliefs), makes no bones about his views: "The only way forward is to abolish the 'leading role of the Party'. . . ." János Kis, a prominent member of the Democratic Opposition, and one of the authors of the opposition's programme "Social Contract" (published last year as a special number of the samizdat journal *Beszélö*) takes a similar position.

THE ATMOSPHERE IN Budapest, with the end of the Kádárist consensus, is heady. There is a sudden, almost unexpected release of energies as the self-imposed limits that constituted the strongest plank of the relationship between régime and intelligentsia are breached. The Kádárist consensus, in its essence, consisted of the proposition that although the Communist system was undesirable, it constituted the "least bad" option in the circumstances. This was a brilliant device. It allowed the intelligentsia the illusion of freedom, coupled with some genuine autonomy; it allowed them to come to terms with the brutal suppression of the 1956 revolution without too bad a conscience; and it offered them palpable material benefits, like the *de facto* control of higher education (and the prospect of ensuring the transmission of their privileges to their children through that control).

The régime also did well out of the consensus. It kept the potentially troublesome questioning that an autonomous intelligentsia represents off the agenda. Intellectuals not only accepted the Kádárist taboos—that the essentials of "the System" and the link with the Soviet Union could not be discussed—they even acceded to the Party's definition of where the boundaries of these taboos lay. In this way, Hungarian intellectuals were able to do the régime another service: they travelled the world and disarmed criticism of Hungary, by being able to initiate the criticism themselves.

Time and time again, their Western counterparts were astounded to hear Hungarians say, "The system we have is terrible—but it's as much as we can hope to have". And then followed the meta-communicated, "Nudge, nudge, wink, wink, it should be understood that if we go too far, the Soviet Union will intervene again, and no one wants that, do they?" This, of course, left a huge question a-begging. Was it true that the Soviet Union was not prepared to accept any change in Hungary? Was it really the case that the Kremlin insisted on the exact distribution of power that existed in Hungary (which was so favourable to the autocratic élite)?

The truth is that East European élites have always had more room for manoeuvre against the Soviet Union than they wanted their populations (and Western observers) to believe. In this way they could justify their conservative, anti-reformist policies simply by displaying the Soviet threat without any possibility of closer scrutiny of it. One of the most significant changes of the Gorbachov reform-wave is that this excuse has gone. East European élites are feeling the cold winds.

THIS SYSTEM OF blackmail and delusion is now being very rapidly shattered in Hungary. An extraordinarily wide range of clubs, groups, and associations hold wide-ranging and outspoken discussions and debates. The various political currents that emerged after 1945—and resurfaced briefly in 1956—are yet again visible in the various political circles that have become active. The whole of the political spectrum is represented . . . except orthodox Marxism-Leninism, which has had its day. The media, too, having been a model of smooth Kádárism, have kicked over the traces and report failures and shortcomings with verve.

For the moment, the intellectuals appear to be content with debate and the written word. The population at large is primarily concerned with safeguarding its declining standard of living and facing up to the worse that is to come. Inflation is officially running at 15%; unofficially people reckon with 25%; and once free prices come into force, the sky may be the limit. The decline of the forint is both a real and symbolic illustration of Hungary's decline. In the 1960s, the rough-and-ready exchange-rate between the Austrian Schilling—the Western currency with which all Hungarians are familiar—was around 80:100: currently it is down to 15:100 at the place where it matters, the *Westbahnhof* in Vienna. Sadly for Hungarian pride, the decline is only partly explained by the steady improvement in Austria.

Hungarians, unlike Poles, have become used to price rises; but the economy is in such disarray that no alternative strategies of self-improvement are left. Working overtime in the secondary economy, the favourite strategy for the last decade, is exhausted as a means of labour mobilisation. No more can be done physically—people are already working for as long as 10-14 hours a day. The rising curve of stress-related illness proves the point. Unemployment may well have grown to 100,000 (in a population of 10.7 million) and has yet to reach its apogee. Nevertheless, the response to the present crisis remains low-key. There have been sporadic strikes, protests and leaflets, but little else to date. All the same, the situation is a very uneasy one,

Budapest comparisons are with the pre-revolutionary summer of 1956, but these are not necessarily the most compelling. The *Solidarity* summer of 1980 in Poland may be a better parallel. Whether anything like *Solidarity* will emerge in Hungary is, I think, doubtful.

All major crises in One-Party States erupt when three conditions are fulfilled. There has to be an intensifying current of dissatisfaction in the intelligentsia, which has begun to generate alternatives. There has to be a growing restiveness in society at large, looking actively for alternatives. And, vitally, the leadership has to have lost its will-to-rule; its self-legitimation has to have eroded. The first two conditions are now more or less met in Hungary. The last is still open.

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But the danger signs are evident. The Party membership is disorientated under popular pressure and the absence of directives from the centre. The middle and upper levels of the *apparat* are losing their sense of direction for the same reason. Within the top leadership itself, there is stalemate.

To break all this, Kádár's departure is essential. I was told a Budapest joke which summarised the situation: "Why does Kádár refuse to resign? Because he wants to leave the country in the condition in which he found it."

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

Supervielle

At the risk of incurring the wrath of his omniscient biographer and pertinent commentator, in my view, Jules Supervielle (1884-1960) is not *un grande poète*. He is, however, a poet, and the distinction is a real one. What I am trying to say is that one searches Supervielle's work in vain for a single truly sublime poem, one of those texts that suddenly, from the outset, make everything go quiet inside you, engendering an emptiness that then gives way to the astonishing, irreplaceable union of music and meaning, and in its wake, to what Racine called *une tristesse majestueuse*, a "stately sadness". But there certainly are *oeuvres* that are dominated throughout by a certain poetic flow, even if that flow never becomes truly concentrated—as in those "*poèmes joyaux*" in the style of Petrarch, Mallarmé, or Baudelaire. Supervielle's is such an *oeuvre*.

As his biographer Paseyro points out, he is just as much a poet in his prose.[1] Not that he goes in for "poetic prose" (an exercise that is more often grandiloquent than moving); it is rather that his novels are a poet's novels, like those of Gérard de Nerval. *Le voleur d'enfants* (1926), possibly his finest book with its unique blend of tenderness, clowning, calm improbability, and humour, could not have been conceived, devised, and written by anyone but a poet.

Where would French poetry be without Uruguay, the country we have to thank for Isidore Ducasse (the self-styled "comte de Lautréamont"), and Jules Laforgue, as well as Jules Supervielle? Furthermore, it was a Spanish-American setting that Valéry Larbaud chose for his novel *Fermina Marquez* (1911). And in more general terms, as we are reminded, it was largely to South America that Paris owed its reputation as the "cultural capital" of the world between 1850 and 1950. The greatest Spanish-American poet prior to 1914 and one of the finest poets in world literature was the Nicaraguan Rubén Darío (1867-1916), who, without imitation, transmuted into Spanish the poetic revolution carried through by Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé—at a time when France was still paying extravagant homage to Sully Prudhomme, Catulle Mendès, and Edmond Rostand. Supervielle, however, though he belonged to both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, was both in his manners and in his genius every inch *un homme de lettres français* of the first half of the 20th century.

It was a literary civilisation that disappeared with the Second World War, and one of the delights of Paseyro's book is the way in which it brings that civilisation to life through the person of Supervielle. Its chief, if not its sole criterion was aesthetic. After 1945, this was replaced by the triad of politics, ideology, and didacticism. French literary life during the first half of our century was also characterised by the close, confiding, open-hearted relations that existed among writers. There were *brouilles* of course; in fact there were some famous and very noisy rows. But between such interruptions those relations were fostered and enriched by writers paying profound attention to one another's work. Narcissism was not the only norm, as the very copious correspondences of writers reveal.

Paseyro has sifted out about a thousand letters from or to Supervielle. The time that André Gide, for example, Larbaud (especially), Michaux, Max Jacob, Rilke, Jean Paulhan, and even Henri de Montherlant (who was considered very self-centred) spent writing to colleagues about their work is difficult for us to believe, harried as we are nowadays by the telephone. And such letters were not by any means confined to polite nothings; they were detailed, in-depth analyses—virtually critical essays—based on a quality of reading and a degree of disinterestedness for which only a genuine love of literature can account.

Nor were reputations won as they are today by entering a kind of general purpose star-studded Hall of Fame, in which the racing cyclist, the writer, the TV-personality, the fashion designer, and the chef rub shoulders with one another. Literary reputations were still a distinct breed; becoming a successful writer was first and foremost a question of winning over other writers. A poet gained success through being read by other poets. He garnered his audience in a series of concentric circles, spreading out from a core of connoisseurs.

La vie selon la poésie ("life according to poetry"), as André Breton liked to call it, was the kind Jules Supervielle lived. He was poetry's "volunteer forced-labourer", to borrow Paseyro's excellent subtitle, itself an allusion to a book of Supervielle's entitled *Le forçat innocent*. Poetry floats all through his life, as in his finest collections—*Gravitations* (1925) or *Débarcadères* —even if its brilliant cosmic dust

[1] *Jules Supervielle, le forçat volontaire*. By Ricardo Paseyro. Le Rocher.

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never, to my mind, becomes concentrated in one of those supreme suns that transfix time.

The *Nouvelle Revue de Paris* has also devoted a recent special issue (No. 11, 1987) to Jules Supervielle, and it is a precious mine of information and critical analyses, including some hitherto unpublished letters. None seems more affecting than the last letter from the sick Rilke. Rilke was writing five days before his death in 1926 to thank Supervielle for a book he had sent:

> "*Je pense à vous, poète ami, et, faisant cela, je pense encore le monde, pauvre débris d'un vase qui se souvient d'être de la terre. Mais cet abus de nos sens et de leur dictionnaire par la douleur qui le feuillette. . . .*"
>
> ("I think of you, friend poet, and in so doing I think also of the world, poor heap of shards of a vessel that remembers being the earth. But this abuse of our senses and of their dictionary by pain leafing through it. . . .")

Castro: Facts & Fantasies

TAD SZULC is an American journalist of Polish origin with twenty years' service behind him as the *New York Times* correspondent in various countries. A long-time sympathiser with Fidel Castro and his Cuban revolution, Szulc recovers his critical senses, so to speak, during the course of this mammoth labour of love, *Fidel: A Critical Portrait.*[1]

This is indeed primarily a biography of Fidel. It does not start with the founding of the Castro régime—far from it—we have to wait for some 400 pages before seeing the conquest of "absolute power". As the *New York Times* correspondent in Havana in 1959, Szulc witnessed the event, and his first conversation with Castro dates from that crucial year; it was followed by many others during the formative period of the régime. Then, twenty years later, the erstwhile newspaperman turned historian. He went back to Havana, where Fidel Castro gave him access to the archives.

Which ones, though? And how reliable and complete were they? Our researcher's quite astonishing credulity is not, I am happy to say, unbounded. For although, in 1985, he was granted frequent interviews with Fidel, he was not so bewitched by his model as to fail to notice "the manner in which the Maximum Leader's flexible memory permits him statements contrary to the truth of the event he is recalling." Clearly Castro does after all have something in common with bourgeois-democratic heads of state.

While learning with relief that the *Comandante* gave the author permission to publish his manuscript without asking to inspect it, the reader is slightly disappointed to find that Tad Szulc sometimes appears to censor himself when it comes to assessing his model's political achievements. In the introduction he writes:

> "It is not meant to be a history of the Cuban revolution . . . this is why I will avoid discussing in depth the achievements and problems of the revolution."

The statement borders on farce. Imagine the biography of a racing cyclist, a commander-in-chief, a Presidential election candidate, or a chess champion, that strenuously avoided all mention of its subject's victories and defeats! Thank heaven, Szulc does not always manage to restrain himself; and while it is true that he has given us the fullest life of Castro to date, he does not wholly forgo politics in favour of anecdote.

For instance, when dealing with the crucial year 1959, he comes up with some previously unpublished information that convincingly supports what has hitherto been regarded as a somewhat unorthodox theory. This is that, contrary to legend, it was not the Americans who pushed Fidel Castro into the arms of the Soviets by their hostility to the "democratisation" of Cuba. Not only did the United States help to overthrow the dictator Fulgencio Batista; it was the second country in the world (after Venezuela) to recognise the revolutionary régime in Havana, doing so as early as 7 January 1959, a week after Castro's forces occupied the capital. That was long before the USSR, which took no interest in events on the island at the time and did not wake up to the advantage of such a godsend until a year later. However, Fidel had studied his "little Lenin library" and had long been determined to impose the discipline of Marxism-Leninism on his country. From the very earliest days, while bestowing the trappings of power on a government of national unity (it included all the democrats who had worked to overthrow Batista), he set up a secret government of Communists and fellow-travellers that constituted the real seat of power. That is a key fact; and Tad Szulc establishes it beyond all doubt.

FROM THEN ON, Castro applied the well-known recipe of gradually getting rid of all non-Communist politicos and parties: President Manuel Urrutia, for example, or Huber Matos, the former commander of the insurrectionary troops of the Sierra Maestra. Disagreement, even simply resigning, earned the anti-Castro rebels prompt arrest, together with the traditional Stalinist calumnies of "conspiracy . . . corruption . . . treason". Simultaneously, the population was combed for dissenters, with every village and every quarter of every town visited by—notably—agents of the "National Institute of Agrarian Reform", the body that served to camouflage the secret government's police.

[1] *Fidel: A Critical Portrait.* By TAD SZULC. Hutchinson, £14.95. Translated into French "from the American" as *Fidel Castro, trente ans de pouvoir absolu.* By MARC SAPORTA. Payot.

Why do Paris publishers persist in using the phrase, "*traduit de l'américain*"—a language which doesn't exist. Americans speak English, as should be well known. If there are transatlantic differences of accent and idiom, these also exist within Britain itself, in the various regions and among different classes. Would one ever say that a novel by Georges Simenon or a poem by Henri Michaux was "translated from the Belgian"? Who can think of the works of Rousseau being "*traduites du genevois*"?

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Finally, the elections promised in two years' time were put off for a period of at least four years. Later, on 9 April, Castro announced that they could not be held until everyone had a job and agrarian reform had been achieved. This was a mammoth programme, planned to cover at least a generation. Nor would there be any elections until "every Cuban is fully aware of his rights and duties"—a lofty state of moral discernment that could take them centuries to acquire. Castro subsequently declared—using the forum of the United Nations, where he was applauded by all the important "Third World" leaders—that the Cuban people was "unanimously" opposed to elections in the immediate future. And that was that.

But if it is manifestly wrong to claim that it was American hostility that drove Castro to Communism, it is equally wrong, according to Tad Szulc, to say that the United States did not try to oust him before Cuba was communised. To be more precise, there were, as usual, two camps within the American administration. It was the "destabilisation camp" that forced President Kennedy into the decision to launch the disastrous Bay of Pigs operation. But, ironically, in 1958 the CIA had, through its agent in Santiago, paid Castro's movement 50,000 dollars (today equivalent to just under half-a-million dollars). It had already given the same amount to the leader of another insurgent movement, Justo Carillo. In fact, its open-handedness made the CIA the number one "investor" in the 1959 Cuban revolution.

SZULC'S BOOK is torn between his indulgence for the man and his exposure of the misdeeds of the dictator, which the journalist in him cannot always help recording. That indulgence leads him particularly to minimise the extent of the repression that followed the revolution and to take Fidel's excuses for it at face value. According to Szulc, Castro was unable to reach an understanding with Faure Chomón, head of the Student Revolutionary Directorate, because that organisation represented the "middle class" of bogus revolutionaries. But, in 1958, Chomón's movement included 1,500 combatants who stormed the Presidential palace and left behind 35 dead—before Castro had even reached Havana. Szulc makes no mention of this, and doesn't seem to understand that Castro was, in this case, inventing an excuse for getting rid of a rival. The perfection and cruelty of Castro's despotism are well described in Martha Frayre's book, *Ecoute, Fidel*[2]—a fresh document to add to what is already a damning life.

One document already in that file is mentioned by Szulc but not quoted. This is the celebrated letter that Huber Matos wrote during his rigged trial, before he was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment, warning Castro against the totalitarian direction his régime was taking. Simultaneously plea and indictment, it speaks of the dissipation of revolutionary expectations in a tyrannical police state organised around the cult of a small-time Stalin.

Then, suddenly, from one sentence to the next, the truth will out. The effect, for the reader, is like biting on a grain of pepper in a bowl of whipped cream. He learns to his amazement that "Castro's oppressive cultural policies have dealt a lethal blow to creativity in [Cuba]" and that "even in 1986 the island was a wasteland of ideas". Later the author lets slip in passing that from 1968 onwards "Moscow made the *KGB* paramount in Cuba". But the best bit is the epilogue, where in the space of three pages Szulc pulverises the achievement of the *Líder Maximo*. Nothing is left out.

> The paralysis of the economy has reduced Cuba to importing sugar and rice. . . . People's ration books entitle them to fewer and fewer commodities, despite Soviet subsidisation to the tune of 4 billion dollars a year—half the national income. . . . Castro boasts (in *Le Monde*) of not having to pay it back; in reality he does indeed pay it back in the form of mercenaries who go off to Africa to get themselves killed on behalf of the USSR, or labourers sent against their will to work vast tracts of forest in the arctic snows of Siberia. (I believe the unfashionable word the older dictionaries use for such people is "slaves".)

Szulc has no hesitation in declaring that *Granma*, the Cuban Party's newspaper, "now rivals *Pravda* in quality, especially through the generous use of red ink". But he trots out that classic piece of flannel to the effect that, however bad things are now, they are better than they were "before". This is simply not true. In 1959, Cuba enjoyed the third highest per-capita income in Latin America (after Chile and Uruguay) and one of the highest rates of literacy. According to UN figures, the island had one of the best medical and social infrastructures, while as early as 1950 its infant-mortality statistics bore comparison with those of developed countries.[3]

Finally, the book surely damns itself by the fact that the bulk of the history of Castroist Cuba—namely the period 1964-86, when the régime had consolidated its position and was operating at full stretch—takes up barely 60 pages out of almost 600. What should we say of a biography of Napoleon —*mutatis mutandis*—in which the period of his emperorship, 1804-15, took up less than a tenth of the work?

Perhaps this is actually Tad Szulc's roundabout way of whispering his final message in our ear: what a nice person Fidel would have been if he had never taken up politics and gone into government!

J.-F.R.

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[2] Martha Frayre, *Ecoute Fidel* (Denoël, 1987).

[3] See also, in ENCOUNTER, Norman Luxenburg, "A Look at Castro's Statistics" (March 1984).

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Arabs & Jews in Palestine

Zionist Dilemmas—By VERNON BOGDANOR

"We know that we are standing at the edge of a precipice in this country—but at the same time we must guard the soul of every Jew, and particularly of young Jews, lest they regard the rifle as their god. They must pray for the hour when they can cast away their rifles."
Moshe Shertok (later Sharett), 1942

IT IS A CRUEL IRONY that the 40th anniversary of Israel's independence has become a matter not for pride or celebration at what has been achieved, but for profound and often anguished reflection upon the fact that the creation of the state has given rise to a new, Palestinian Diaspora, a mirror image to that of the Jews. For there can be no doubt that it is the Palestinians who have become the real political victims of the Arab/Israeli conflict; victims as much perhaps of the intransigence and greed of their "Arab brothers" as of Zionism, but victims all the same. Their historic loyalties, memories, myths and hopes cast a mocking light on the words of *Ha'Tikvah*, Israel's own national anthem, "Our hope is not yet lost, to return to the land of our forefathers. . . ."

How different Israel's position seemed to be at her 20th anniversary, celebrated just eleven months after her stunning victory in the Six-Day War. Admittedly, Israelis had already come to realise that their euphoric hopes for peace immediately after the conclusion of the war, were not going to be realised. At the Arab summit conference at Khartoum at the end of August 1967, the Arab leaders reiterated their guiding principles—no peace, no recognition, no negotiation with Israel. Israel was to remain in control of the lives of 1.3 million Arabs in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, many of whom had fled from her victorious armies in 1948. As the Israeli-Arab writer, Attalah Mansour has put it,

> "Instead of stepping on the snake that threatened them, they swallowed it. Now they have to live with it, or die from it. . . ."[1]

Nevertheless, the Six-Day War gave Israelis an assurance and self-confidence which hardly remains today. For they could then believe with a clear conscience in the Zionist concept of the "purity of arms", *tohar haneshek*. It is this belief which has been shattered by the Palestinian uprising in the Occupied territories. The methods used by some Israeli soldiers in combating this uprising—massive beatings and other forms of physical intimidation, as well as at least one instance of burying suspected trouble-makers alive—were seen by television-viewers all over the world. These methods, although contrary to governmental policy and condemned by almost all senior Army officers, have tarnished Israel's liberal image, as have the collective reprisals upon Arab villages in the West Bank.

UNFORTUNATELY, what has happened in the Occupied territories has also served to obscure Israel's massive achievements. Israel has around 3.5 million Jews concentrated within her borders. Of these, fewer than 3% come from Western democracies such as Britain and the United States. Nearly 40% are from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the 20th-century graveyard of the Jewish people, while around 45% are from Asian or African countries where they were treated, at best, as second-class citizens, and at worst as routine objects of violence and pillage. The lives of these people have been utterly transformed as a result of the birth of the Jewish state. In 1967, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, summed up what he thought was Israel's greatest achievement in the following words:

> "We converted the human dust which gathered here from all the corners of the earth. We converted them into a sovereign state which occupies an honourable place in the family of nations."

The people of Israel, most of whom derive from countries which have barely known democratic government, have succeeded in creating a sophisticated, advanced, and on the whole well-functioning democracy in highly unpropitious circumstances. Indeed, Israel remains the only country in the

[1] Cited in Amos Elon, *The Israelis, Founders and Sons* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), p. 31. This book remains one of the best guides to the complexities of Israeli life.

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Middle East in which an *Arab* citizen can cast a meaningful vote and enjoy rights which are not wholly at the mercy of the ruling authorities.

Yet all this counts for little in the light of the failure to achieve an accommodation with the Palestinians, a failure which threatens the whole foundation of the Zionist enterprise. Zionism aimed for nothing less than normalising the existence of the Jewish people. Yet how can the Jewish condition remain anything other than abnormal when the Jewish state remains surrounded by enemies barely willing to accept her existence as permanent? Better by far to be citizens of a ghetto state than to remain a ghetto people. But a ghetto state was hardly what the Founding Fathers of Zionism had in mind when they set about their task.

ZIONISM, HOWEVER, has always been a severely self-critical movement, and it is difficult to believe that Israel's 40th anniversary will not be made the occasion for a reappraisal of Jewish nationalism and of its relations with the Arab world, and in particular, the Palestinian people. If this reappraisal is to be of any value, then it must begin by coming to terms with Israel's past and with the history of the Zionist movement before the creation of the state. For Zionism, more than any other nationalism, is based upon memory, upon the power of not forgetting. What claim, after all, did the Jews have to a national home in Palestine other than the claim of historic right, the claim of the past? In 1906, Arthur Balfour asked Chaim Weizmann why the Zionists had turned down the offer of Uganda as a national home. Weizmann answered in the following words:

> "I said, 'Mr Balfour, if you were offered Paris instead of London would you take it? Would you take Paris instead of London?' He looked surprised. He: 'But London is our own!' I said: 'Jerusalem was our own when London was a marsh'. . . ."[2]

Balfour (as Conor Cruise O'Brien points out in his book *The Siege*), although well aware that Palestine was already inhabited, seems to have made no reference to the Arab question until 1920 when—in a speech to a Jewish audience—he spoke of the Arabs as "a great, an interesting, an attractive race", and claimed that "they will not grudge that small notch in what are now Arab territories being given to the people who for all these hundreds of years have been separated from it. . . ."[3]

The Zionist movement too has been accused of ignoring the existence of the Arabs in Palestine. All too often, the basic character of Zionism has been deduced from the absurd quotation attributed to Israel Zangwill, that Zionists sought to settle "the people without a land" in "the land without a people". Anyone retaining such a misconception would benefit considerably from reading Yosef Gorny's scrupulous and sensitive *Zionism and the Arabs 1882-1948*, and

[2] Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error* (1949), p. 145.

[3] Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Siege: The Saga of Israel and Zionism* (1986), p. 30. See Max Beloff's critique in ENCOUNTER, "The Israelis and their Enemies" (December 1986).

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appropriately subtitled *A Study of Ideology*.[4] Indeed, it is hard to think of anyone connected with Middle Eastern affairs who would not benefit from reading it.

THE MISTAKE MADE by most of those who write about Zionism is to underrate its complexity as a political movement. Gorny shows that, far from having no answer at all to the Arab problem, Zionists had a whole host of answers. Unfortunately, however, none of their answers were relevant since they all assumed that there was some means of persuading Arab opinion to accept the basic aims of the Zionist movement. Zionists sought to secure the territorial concentration of the Jewish people in Palestine, a transformation of the Jewish socio-economic structure, and the revival of the Hebrew language. To achieve these aims, the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine was deemed essential. Zionists hoped that this might be made acceptable to the Arabs (and so also to the British Mandate), if the aim was approached gradually and with circumspection.

> "'We require evolutionary tactics', Weizmann declared, shortly after the Balfour Declaration was issued. 'If we set ourselves small goals and implement them in the best possible fashion, we will some day win the confidence of the British Government. But if we make sweeping demands and do not immediately follow up with actions, they will no longer have confidence in us. Englishmen operate empirically, by experience and not by plan. Everything depends on the people, their ability, and their iron patience. There is an English proverb about the camel and the tent: first the camel pushes a foot into the tent, then he slips inside. This is the policy we must adopt. We must avoid sharp corners. . . .'" (Gorny, p. 98)

Thus, although the basic Zionist claim was the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine, Zionists were willing in 1917 to accept the Balfour Declaration, which compromised the claim by speaking merely of a "national home" for the Jewish people *in* Palestine, rather than of Palestine as a national home for the Jews. It left open the question of whether there would actually be a Jewish majority in this "national home" or whether the Jews would retain only minority status. In 1922, the British Government partitioned Palestine, separating Transjordan on the East Bank of the Jordan from the West Bank; and it restricted Jewish immigration into Palestine. This, too, was accepted by most Zionists. In 1937, the Zionist movement accepted the plan put forward by the Peel Commission for partition of the rest of Palestine; and, as is well known, they also accepted the United Nations partition plan of 1947. Thus, provided that their fundamental aims were not compromised, Zionists were fully prepared to limit their territorial ambitions. Weizmann declared that the Zionists were willing to do all that they could to meet the objections of the Arab population short of abandoning their central tenet: the creation of a Jewish majority.

Not surprisingly, they met with total rejection on the part of the Palestinian Arabs, and a near-total rejection on the part of the neighbouring Arab states. The fundamental Palestinian demand was for the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and the creation of an independent Palestine with an Arab majority. But that, of course, was the one claim which the Zionists could not accept.

> "Paradoxically [declared Arthur Ruppin, head of the Palestine Office of the Zionist Organisation] one could say that what we can receive we do not need, and what we need we cannot get. What the Arabs are willing to give us is, at the most, national minority rights for Jews within an Arab nation according to the formula of national rights in Eastern Europe. . . . We have learned often enough from events in Eastern Europe to what extent it is possible to force a majority which holds the reins of power to grant the minority true national equality." (Gorny, p. 199)

What incentive could there be to persuade the Jews of Eastern Europe to come to Palestine if they were once again to find themselves in a minority dependent upon the goodwill of others? Ruppin concluded that "A Zionism which is willing to collude in such a compromise with the Arabs—will soon find itself a Zionism without Zionists."

ZIONISTS STRUGGLED to find a way out of this dilemma. Some argued that Arab hostility was—unlike Christian anti-Semitism—not something fundamental or basic, but a phenomenon that could be conciliated if only the Jews would become more "Eastern", showing more sympathy for Arab culture and language, instead of disporting themselves like superior Europeans in Arab lands. One Sephardic Zionist commented in 1920, that the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine needed "to delve deeply into Arab matters, to display goodwill and true impartiality—and these will bring us to the true understanding which will lead to *harmonious unity* between Jews and Arabs." He was not to know that the more "Eastern" the Jews, the more hawkish they would be on the Arab question. Although party allegiances in Israel are by no means determined on foreign policy issues alone, it is worth noting that since 1977, around 70% of the Sephardic vote has gone to Likud and the religious parties, while around 60% of European Jews have supported Labour. In addition, survey evidence shows that Israelis of European origin at all educational levels are far more willing to form "friendships with Arabs" than Jews of Sephardic ancestry belonging to all social groups—a striking example of Freud's "narcissism of minor differences" as a source of national tensions.[5]

Zionists of a more socialist persuasion held that hostility towards the Jews was promoted by reactionary landlords and feudal potentates so as to divert popular resentment away from unjust social conditions. According to this viewpoint, Jews could form an alliance with the Arab working class, and even with the Palestinian national movement, since both the Socialist-Zionists and the Arab people shared common aims.

[4] *Zionism and the Arabs 1882-1948: A Study of Ideology*. By YOSEF GORNY. Oxford University Press, £32.50.

[5] Michael Wolffsohn, *Israel: Polity, Society, and Economy 1882-1986* (Humanities Press International, New Jersey, 1987), pp. 149, 152. Wolffsohn's book is an essential work of reference for anyone seeking to understand the political scene in Israel.

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So long as the Jews did not "exploit" the Arab masses, but were willing to work "in harmony" with them, there need be no conflict.

Here, too, the Zionists deceived themselves. For, by definition, a Zionist was fighting not primarily for *class* interests but for the national interests of the Jewish working class. Otherwise, why should he have bothered to make the journey from Eastern Europe to Palestine? The very fact of his Zionism made the appeal for bi-national cooperation in a socialist state distinctly implausible. Indeed, many Jewish socialists did not recognise the Arabs of Palestine as a separate nation at all, but only as part of a wider pan-Arab nationalism. Holding such a viewpoint, it was easy to argue that Palestinians were not being asked to give up very much—just a small notch, as Balfour had put it, just a sliver of land perhaps, nothing more. . . .

A third school of thought, characterised by Gorny as "liberal", was fully alive to the fact of Arab hostility, and did not attribute it either to vague cultural differences or to false consciousness. "The Arabs", declared the Zionist philosopher Ahad Ha'am (the name means One-of-the-People) as early as 1891,

> ". . . see and understand what we are doing and what our aspirations are in Palestine, but they keep their silence and pretend not to know, because at present they do not perceive our actions as a threat to their future. . . ."

This being so, the Jews must "learn from our past and present history, how careful we must be, not to bring down upon ourselves the wrath of the people of this country by disgraceful actions."

But what else followed from the liberal perspective? Behaving decently was not enough where there were real conflicts at stake. Weizmann hoped, as did most Zionists, that he would be able to cooperate with the Arabs, something he recognised to be of central importance if the Zionist objective was to be fulfilled. All he asked for was the right of free Jewish immigration, the principle enshrined in the Balfour Declaration. But that was something which no Arab leader could accept. They would give the Jews only what they already had, not the one thing which they needed. Believing, no doubt rightly, that his essential precondition could not be met, Weizmann simply shrugged his shoulders and turned to other matters. What else could he have done?

ZIONISTS, THEN, CONCENTRATED upon their main task of "creating facts", encouraging Jewish immigration to Palestine so that they could create their Jewish majority. They did so, on the whole, without illusions. "We must avoid two illusions on the Arab question", declared Ben-Gurion in 1922.

> "First, that Palestine is an empty country in which we can do as we choose without taking the inhabitants into consideration. This has caused us considerable harm. Second, that through diplomatic efforts aimed at the Arabs we are safeguarding our existence here. Neither official declarations nor Balfour can bestow Palestine on us—the country will be ours only through our own labour. No diplomatic relations nor British nor Arab diplomacy can save us from pogroms. In order to save ourselves we must organise and defend our lives. And it is our duty, in order to help ourselves, to raise the living standards of the Arabs."

This position taken up by Ben-Gurion, the leader of the Zionist labour movement, was not in practice so very different from that of the leading figure of the Zionist Right, Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Jabotinsky is the spiritual forefather of the Israeli Right, of Menachem Begin, and Yitzhak Shamir, and one cannot understand their approach to relationships with the Arabs without grasping the hold which Jabotinsky's "iron wall" theory has upon the Likud. Jabotinsky shared the view of Weizmann and Ben-Gurion, that no accommodation with the Arabs was possible until a Jewish majority had been achieved.

> "I do not believe that we can reconcile them to the possibility of a Jewish Palestine by offering the bribe of economic amelioration or by a blatantly diluted and distorted interpretation of the objectives of Zionism.
>
> "The champions of peace among us are trying to persuade us that the Arabs are either fools who can be deceived by a watered-down version of our objectives, or are a greedy tribe ready to forego their prior rights to Palestine in return for cultural or economic advantages. I totally reject this evaluation of the Arab character."

The Arabs objected to Zionism not because they failed to understand it, but because they understood it only too well.

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Therefore, if a settlement with the Arabs was a precondition for the realisation of Zionism, the aims of the Zionists would have to be abandoned. The only way in which the Jewish majority could be achieved was by continued immigration and settlement against the wishes of the native population.

"Settlement", Jabotinsky believed, "can develop under the protection of a force which is not dependent on the local population, behind an iron wall which they will be powerless to break down." When the state was achieved,

> "It is my hope and belief that we will then offer them guarantees which will satisfy them, and both peoples will live in peace as good neighbours. But the sole way to this agreement is through the iron wall, namely the establishment in Palestine of a force which will in no way be influenced by Arab pressure. In other words, the only way to achieve a settlement in the future is total avoidance of attempts to arrive at a settlement in the present."

UNFORTUNATELY, THE THEORY OF the "iron wall" has proved a better guide to the actual realities of the Jewish/Arab conflict than the more sanguine prognostications of liberals or socialists. Such accommodation as Israel has been able to achieve with her Arab neighbours occurred only after the existence of the Jewish state had come to be seen as a basic and permanent fact. It was, after all, Menachem Begin with whom Egypt's Anwar Sadat negotiated a peace treaty—not Rabin or Peres. And it was not until the 1980s, a decade so far dominated by Likud, that there were signs that the Arab states, and even possibly Arafat's PLO, might be willing to recognise an Israel confined to her pre-1967 borders.

Whether that is something which Israel is now able to accept remains, at the time of writing, wholly unclear. For Israel faces what will probably be the most important general election in her history later this year, a general election at which very stark alternatives will be posed. Israelis will face a choice which can only be described as existential: on what terms can they live with their Arab neighbours? Can they now achieve that "settlement in the future" which Jabotinsky thought could only be obtained once the Jews were already in possession of a state of their own? All those who wish Israel well will hope that she will be able to answer these fundamental questions in the spirit of her founding fathers, so sensitively and carefully delineated by Yosef Gorny.

A Rejuvenated Nation?

Italy Observed—By Roy Pryce

"IT WOULD BE presumptuous for foreigners to describe the inner life and thought of another country, and this we have not tried to do." The words are those of Bolton King and Thomas Okey in the preface to their classic study *Italy Today*, published in 1901. Nowadays foreign observers are not so modest. In his latest book, *Democracy, Italian Style*,[1] Joseph LaPalombara sets out to tear aside the successive veils, and reveal all.

In doing so, he challenges much of the received wisdom about how Italians conduct their affairs. Not a man for half measures, he does this by standing a good deal of it on its head, including many of his own previous conclusions. The words pour forth (as they do when he talks) in a great cascade: you can almost see him jumping up and down with glee.

All this is good fun. But it raises a number of questions—not just about whether or not he is right (I shall come to that later)—but about the process of observation by foreigners, and the motives behind the images they create of other countries and cultures. "The foreigner starts with the advantage that he is, at all events, comparatively free from bias." So said the British authors in 1901. But over the last hundred years or so, both the British—and more recently, the Americans—have had a good deal of political capital invested in Italy. Investments of such importance cannot be treated with indifference. So, for the ruling élites of both countries, this has meant a nervous concern with Italy: high hopes for their protégé, accompanied by worries about whether the country of Machiavelli can be safely counted on the side of the angels.

In the 19th century, British liberals hoped that unification and nationhood would put the Pope back where he belonged and give birth to a sound liberal and parliamentary state. At the beginning of this century these hopes remained alive in spite of some disquieting evidence to the contrary. King and Okey remained optimistic:

> "These pages will prove, we hope, to the English reader, first that the divisions in Italian life are neither as deep nor as permanent as they are often thought to be: next, that underneath the slough of misgovernment and corruption and political apathy there is a rejuvenated nation, instinct with the qualities that make a great people."

That soothing message is not dissimilar from what is now offered by LaPalombara—but with one big difference. The

[1] *Democracy, Italian Style*. By JOSEPH LAPALOMBARA. Yale University Press, $25.00, £14.95.

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nationalist overtones come through loud and clear. So it was not altogether surprising that, when in the early 1920s the liberal state went under, there were many like Churchill who accepted its demise without much ado. Mussolini promised a rejuvenated nation. Not only that, Italy was now a front-line state in the fight against Bolshevism. And when that job was done, there were a good number in Britain who also put their faith in *Il Duce* to curb Hitler's ambitions. On all these counts, considerations of *Realpolitik* overcame scruples about democracy. Not everyone in Britain agreed, of course. Those who sided with the anti-Fascists were equally vocal, and deeply concerned. So the messages fed back to the British public about what was going on in the country were discordant, and certainly not dispassionate.

In the years immediately following World War II, Italy was back in the front line. The Communists looked more menacing than ever. In 1948 there were fears of imminent insurrection. This time, however, the country had a much more powerful and single-minded protector. The United States poured in money and threw its weight around to shore up the new Republic and those considered sound within it, without much consideration for the finer points of Italian politics. And American academics were encouraged to set to work to provide US policy-makers with the data they needed. What they came up with was not exactly encouraging: a picture of a society deeply divided, with most of its citizens highly suspicious of the state, and many of them alienated from its economic and political system. As a bastion of democracy, this did not seem a very good bet.

But here we are in the late 1980s, and it all looks very different. Everything is fine, says LaPalombara: democracy Italian-style is great. It may not work exactly according to classic Anglo-Saxon prescriptions, but it delivers. It may look ramshackle and precarious, and the Italians themselves are as critical as hell of their own political class. But don't pay too much attention to them, or the things they worry about, like the Mafia, and terrorism, and corruption and mismanagement, and governments which come and go. All that is part of the scene, but the Italians have learned to cope. And the rest is *spettacolo*.

So what has happened in the meantime? Something drastic has clearly happened to LaPalombara's own perceptions of Italy. Is it only that the scales have fallen from his eyes? Or must we seek other explanations?

Part of the change is no doubt due to the confidence of a man who has achieved eminence in his profession as a political scientist: he can afford to cock a snook at all and sundry. And there is no doubt about LaPalombara's knowledge of the Italian scene. But there is something more than that. His current views suggest—and no doubt in part reflect—a much more relaxed view about present-day Italy on the part of the United States and its policy-makers. The reason is that the country is no longer seen as a front-line state. So what happens there is not now so important as it used to be. Take it easy, the author is saying. It's time for a cool look at the scene. Let the Italians do their own thing in their own way.

For Italy, this marks an historic change. Getting out of the front line has done the country a power of good. So, too, did its earlier abandonment of dreams of national grandeur. No doubt the attempt to realise these was an exhilarating experience for a while. There was plenty of support for Mussolini within the country as long as he was riding high. But the country paid a high price for entrusting so much power to one man and one party. Following *Il Duce* not only led to military and political disaster: it also gave reign to some of the murkier forces which have always been present in Italian society. The early Fascists were bands of thugs, and that element persisted throughout, culminating in their collaboration during the War with the German occupiers to hunt down the Jews. Although 85% of the Jewish community survived, the story of the 6,800 who perished—set out in chilling detail in a recent study by Susan Zuccotti—is a grim reminder of the horrors of that period.[2]

Italians' revulsion against that part of their country's past remains profound. And this explains the deep commitment on the part both of élites and the general public to the new pluralist and parliamentary democracy. LaPalombara is certainly right to draw attention to that—to the persistently high turn-out at elections, and the underlying political stability.

However, some of the other positive features he underlines are much more recent. The most important are due to precisely the same factors that account for the author's own change of perspective, in particular the change in Superpower relations which has relaxed tension between them, and, at the same time, taken the heat off Italy. The gradual liberation of the Italian Communist party from Moscow, and its evolution towards its present reformist position, has been at the centre of this, together with the regaining of independence by the Socialists. The area of democratic politics has been greatly enlarged. It has also strengthened in the face of the common threat of terrorism, still a danger as the Naples bomb attack in mid-April demonstrated.

[2] *The Italians and the Holocaust: Persecution, Rescue and Survival.* By Susan Zuccotti. Peter Halban, £14.95.

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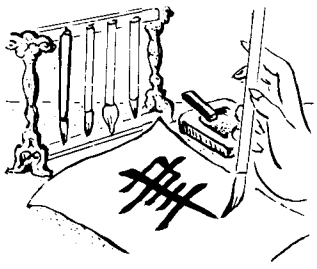
HAVING ACKNOWLEDGED all that, is everything in the garden really so rosy as LaPalombara claims? Here, sceptical Italians surely provide a more reliable guide. Governmental instability is a serious matter, even if the cast remains much the same, and the country has developed techniques to mitigate some of its inevitable consequences. Two examples illustrate the price the country is paying for the games its politicians love to play. One is the mass of public debt which has been accumulated over the years, now amounting to over 11% of the country's GDP—an enormous burden which, as the unhappy experience of the recent Goria government has shown, has now become a major political as well as financial problem. Another, though less dramatic, is the impact instability has had on Italy's role within the European Community. Membership of the Community is one of the Republic's major commitments, sustained by genuine conviction and enthusiasm. But its wobbly governments have rarely been able to make much of a showing in its councils. Apart from De Gasperi in its early days and Craxi more recently, the Italian contribution has depended more on individual ministers and determined individuals outside the government—like Altiero Spinelli who fathered the Draft Treaty for European Union in the European Parliament—than sustained government initiatives.

It is also difficult to share LaPalombara's view that endemic public antipathy towards the country's political élites and leaders reinforces, rather than undermines, democratic structures and practices. *Spettacolo* is all very well, but all too often it makes a very poor show. Unlike the *Brigate Rosse*, the professional politicians have not yet bothered to learn how to exploit the new mass media. Their television performances in last year's general election, for instance, were quite appalling. Many of them paid for personal ads on the television: those I saw, sandwiched between plugs for more attractive products, go a long way to explain the success at the polls of a well-known strip-tease artiste. And the discussion programme in which LaPalombara himself took part was no better: a row of talking faces, droning on at inordinate length. Both on and off the screen, the Italians are right to want a better performance from their political élites.

The Perfect Gentleman

Poets of the Sung Dynasty—By JULIE LANDAU



A STAGGERING AMOUNT of poetry was written in the Sung Dynasty (960-1279). Most of it has survived, retaining its freshness and appeal, even in English translation. In the tradition of much Chinese poetry that preceded it, it is striking for its vivid imagery, and intensely personal tone. The images are precise, concrete; the emotion understated or simply evoked.

Visual images from poetry were so compelling that they found their way into not only Chinese painting, but Japanese and Korean as well. Those untranslatable into another medium—Yang Wan-li's "The sour after-taste of plums attacks my teeth", for instance—linger in the mind, echo in the literature.

Imagery, tied to a specific moment, a particular place, a season, a time of day, the experience of a particular person, appeared in the very earliest Chinese poetry. For the Sung Dynasty poets, one of the most important models was the 4th-century nature poet, T'ao Ch'ien, who, from the details of his life constructed a combination of landscape and self-portrait.

I planted peas under South Mountain
Weeds flourish but the peas are scant
Mornings I rise to deal with the wilderness
The moon hangs from my hoe when I return
Long grass and shrubs narrow the path
Evening mists soak through my clothes
But never mind about wet clothes—
If things work out. . . .

"Returning to the Farm to Live", No. 3

Half photograph album, half diary, both the particular and the autobiographical elements are unmistakable.

But there was only one T'ao Ch'ien and there were hundreds of Sung poets, each ardently trying to express himself. Almost to a man, they were civil servants, as poets had always been in China. To put it more romantically, China was for thousands of years governed by the poets. In imperial China, the fusion of intellectual and political leadership was not only traditional, it was institutionalised through the examination system, a practice already ancient in the 10th century.

Entry into government was through exams, centred on the Confucian classics and emphasising literary ability, particularly poetry. In the Sung dynasty, the exams were open to any man who could afford the decades of preparation. A candidate would have known by heart thousands of poems, and would have been able to express himself with ease in all forms. As a result, there was a vast army of intellectuals whose primary concern was the paternalistic administration of a highly centralised empire: not philosophers, as Plato would have had them (though some were that too), but poets.

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What is special about the Sung official is the degree of his commitment to his own cultivation. Confucius had said that culture begins with poetry, so the Sung gentleman wrote poetry. He wrote poetry all the time: to criticise the government, to satirise his enemies, to communicate with friends, to commemorate occasions, to pass the time, to express his feelings. There were writing games, writing parties, writing contests. Usually, T'ang Dynasty (618-907) poetry was the model; Sung rivals it in quality and overwhelms it in quantity.

Though his passion to express himself began with poetry, it was by no means all the Sung gentleman did to this end. He painted, did calligraphy, played a musical instrument, designed a garden, collected, compiled, invented. In painting, the amateur—if indeed the scholar was an amateur—completely displaced the academician. There was an absolute shift in value from the realistic representation of nature espoused by the academy, to a lyrical one of meaning beyond the images favoured by the scholar. Refinement didn't matter: what counted was vigour and spontaneity.

IN HIS ZEAL to evoke or express in painting and calligraphy, the Sung gentleman might apply ink with strips of paper, elm pods, or rushes. The same sort of impulse in poetry led him to take up a song form from the singing house, erotic in content, disreputable in origin, and to mould it into what became the most important lyric form in Chinese: *tz'u*. These lines are from an early Sung *tz'u* by a prime minister, Yen Shu:

The water in the pond was green, the wind a little warm
When first I saw her
To the ring of the melody's opening bars
She came dancing, waist spinning red confusion

Quite possibly the poem was dashed off in the singing house itself in a moment of enthusiasm for a particular singer.

Among the hundreds of thousands of poems preserved from the Sung, the proportion of *tz'u* is the smallest; it only became popular, and respectable enough to sign and collect, fairly late. Rooted in the times, much of it was written in the vernacular. It acquired rules as time went on, but, for a while at least, it was much freer than earlier forms, a perfect vehicle for self-expression.

In terms of intellectual ferment, rediscovery of classical models, and humanism, one is tempted to compare this period of Chinese history to the Renaissance in Europe. The classical models, however, were Chinese, and the humanism Confucian. Officials considered themselves personally responsible for the welfare of the people, and each vehemently advocated—or opposed—something: land reform, tax reform, education reform, reform of the examination system, of interpretation of the classics, of prose style, social reform, economic reform. Nothing escaped improvement: there was foreign trade; there were printed books; paper money; and a means to grow a second rice crop. Academies flourished; dictionaries, histories, anthologies, and encyclopaedias were compiled. Documents were preserved, antiquities collected, annotated bibliographies made. There was a wealth of public services and entertainment, and there were countless advances in science and technology.

Despite its brilliance, Sung as an empire was a disaster. It was not strong, not large, not expansionist. The dynasty was plagued by wars, humiliated by treaties and tribute, and as a result kept close to bankruptcy. Responsible for both the brilliance and the disasters were the civil and military administrators: the poets. They sought, with almost equal intensity, both the public good and the private voice.

THE LIVES OF three of these poets—Su Shih, Li Ch'ing-chao, and Hsin Ch'i-chi—span the significant years of the dynasty. Their work marks some of the high points in development of the lyric, but also raises questions as to whether the personal tone was achieved despite the fact that most of the poets came from the same homogeneous background, or because of it.

Nothing particularly differentiates Su Shih from many other Northern Sung officials, except that with Su, everything was more so: talent, versatility, output, as well as hardship, frustration, and bad luck. His grandfather had been illiterate. His father, a failed scholar—meaning he had failed the examinations, a perfectly respectable position—was a prominent literary figure. Su Shih studied for, and passed the examinations with his brother. All three Sus were leaders in the movement to reform the prose style, and are among "the eight prose masters of T'ang and Sung".

The radical economic and social reform programme of a political rival, Wang An-shih (it dominated Chinese politics

Time Sanctified

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for more than a generation, and was later to be blamed for every ill that befell China since that time) was adopted shortly after the brothers entered the government. It left them almost permanently out of power: within two years, Wang had swept all opposition out of court. His reforms would seem radical even today, but Su Shih objected more strongly to the repressive measures needed to enforce them than to the reforms themselves.

Immoderate in whom he compared to "chirping cicadas" and "croaking frogs", Su Shih was sometimes imprisoned and often exiled, posted to malarial regions where he faced endless difficulties and near-starvation. Whatever the circumstances, he could take pleasure in some small aspect of nature or of life—a sudden shower, a plum blossom, a cup of tea:

White bubbles, the floating flowers of noon tea,
Luxuriant fresh shoots and sprouts in a spring dish
All this to savour, what pure delight!

A man of immense good humour and astonishing resilience, he was also a celebrated drinker, in the tradition of great Chinese poets. "Last night at Tung P'o I was drunk, sober, and drunk again—" begins one poem. "I gaily drink until dawn", he writes to his brother on Moon Festival, "and write this, completely drunk, thinking of you." In the poem he compares their separations and reunions to the waxing and waning of the moon; and he concludes: "We share this loveliness, even a thousand miles apart." As separation became more permanent, their exchange of poems on this festival grows increasingly melancholy:

Life on this night is not often good
Next year's moon, from where will we see it?

Of a career that lasted forty years, only eight were spent in positions of power and prestige in the capital. The rest, at best, involved one far-flung post after another; and at worst, prison under sentence of death. Three years were the maximum any official was allowed in one post; Su tended to be moved more frequently.

A SERIES OF five short poems, written when he was Governor of Hsu Men, paints scenes along the road while he is on a ceremonial pilgrimage to give thanks for rain. One scene:

Hemp leaves piled layer on bright layer—
Which house cooks cocoons? The whole village is fragrant
Soft-voiced girls chat over fences as they reel silk

Old men with sticks look about, bleary drunk
With green-wheat buns in their hungry stomachs
They wonder when the bean leaf will be ripe

Su essentially wrote about what he did and what he saw, what he thought, what he felt; his poems trace his life from day to day. One of the most famous records a dream about his dead wife.

Ten years living and dead have drawn apart
I do nothing to remember
But I cannot forget
Your lonely grave a thousand miles away
There is nowhere I can talk of my sorrow
Even if we met, how would you know me
My face full of dust
My hair like snow

In the dark of night, a dream: suddenly, I am home
You by the window
Doing your hair
I look at you and cannot speak
Your face is streaked by endless tears
Year after year must they break my heart
These moonlit nights
That low pine grave?

There were other dreams ("when one wakes, pleasure fades, regret lingers"), reflections on literature and history, impressions on viewing a painting; and always the hope, even in old age, that he could fulfil his potential as a statesman.

When will the emperor send Feng T'ang
So I can stretch my bow into a full moon
Gaze north
And shoot the sky wolf?

Although his troubles were directly attributable to his opposition to Wang's policies, the two men remained friends and exchanged poems throughout their lives.

During his lifetime Su was recognised as a poet, painter, and calligrapher of the top rank. Much of his work, however, was destroyed shortly after his death owing to the resurgence of Wang's party (Wang himself was dead). Su was post-

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humously stripped of his rank, all stone tablets bearing his calligraphy were ordered to be destroyed, and his literary works were banned—there was a heavy fine for possession of his books. This only increased his popularity; inability to recite his poems was distinctly *déclassé*. A decade later, his rank was posthumously restored, with the Emperor himself collecting Su's manuscripts, paintings, and calligraphy.

IT WAS NOT UNCOMMON at that time to date poems, or to state the occasion on which one was written. Su introduced long, elaborate prose prefaces. For the most part, these are completely autobiographical, recreating the moment of inspiration, the setting from which the poem should be viewed. Sometimes they quite overpower the poem. Here is a 55 character preface to a short poem:

> "I was travelling along the Ch'i River in Huangchou on a spring night. Passing a wine shop, I stopped to drink; drunk, I followed the moon to a bridge spanning a small brook. There, I unsaddled the horse and, with my arm for a pillow, lay down to rest a little. When I awoke, it was already dawn, mountains crowding each other, the flowing river clanging against the bridge. Feeling, strangely, that I had left the human world, I wrote this on a piling. . . ."

Prefaces encourage a common tendency to assume that the poem is autobiographical and to interpret it according to what is known of the poet's life, or to elaborate the life with what is said in the poem. Pressure to do this stems from the intrinsic ambiguity of the poems. However precise the images, however clear the underlying emotion, what is actually being said may not be clear at all.

The Chinese language has built-in ambiguities. There is virtually no syntax. It has no tense, no number, no case. Verbs are often omitted. Certain adjectives can function as verbs. Pronouns are rarely used; in poetry, virtually never. There is no Aristotelian commitment to a single point of view; there are no unities of time and place.

Punctuation is a modern phenomenon, unknown in the old texts, where poems are printed not line by line, but run-on, stanza by stanza. In the more classical forms, however, lines are of a specified length, end-stopped, with strict rules of parallel structure which help to decipher the meaning. *Tz'u* are simply words fitted to music.

The music came first; the transliterated "title" identifies the tune to which the words were written. Some 800 tunes were used again and again, but eventually the music was lost. Each title became a strict form, reconstructed from earlier *tz'u*, based on line length, tones (Chinese is a tonal language), and rhyme. In Su's time, the music still existed, and could be modified slightly to fit the words. In any case, *tz'u*—compared with earlier forms—was relatively free. Long lines were mixed with short; enjambement was allowed; there was no parallelism. These elements made it refreshing to the poets, but now increase the difficulty of puzzling out what is being said.

A three-character line, with characters for "this", "spring", and "come", has dozens of possible meanings.

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spring comes/is coming/has come

since spring came

when spring comes/came

if spring comes/were to come/had come

These meanings, of course, assume that spring is the subject. It may not be. There is no way of knowing whether the poet is talking about a change in the weather or about somebody's visit. The line may have an implied pronoun (*any* pronoun) as the subject; it means some version of:

He came in spring (or this spring)

If I had come in spring

When they came in spring

Since you came in spring

Were she to come in spring

Tense and pronoun can vary in each example.

Enjambement from the preceding or to the following line would create other possibilities. Sometimes the context helps; but often it merely compounds alternatives rather than resolving the ambiguities. Since borrowing lines, images, and conceits, far from being considered plagiarism, was thought elegant and erudite—quotation marks are not used—the whole line, or several lines, might have been quoted or paraphrased from some other poem. This would add a whole new spectrum of meanings—provided, of course, that the source was extant, and that one recognised it.

Little wonder that would-be exegetes rush to the life of the poet in an attempt to make sense of the poems. As the poems are so personal, and the reason for writing them was self-expression, it may even be justified. Unfortunately, across a millenium, lives too can be ambiguous. Traditional Chinese criticism goes back and forth from the life to the work in perfect circularity, using the life as a context for the work, and filling in details of the life from the work, until it all "fits", with a liberal dose of the prejudices and expectations of the interpreter thrown in.

THE CONSEQUENCES of such circular reasoning are particularly unfortunate when applied to the work of Li Ch'ing-chao (1084-1155). Li was, in many ways, "the perfect Sung gentleman": highly respected as a poet, accomplished in music, painting and calligraphy, a collector of rare books and antiquities, the author of various prose works—among those extant are a manual on the game of *Go*, and one of the earliest works of criticism of *tz'u* poetry. Hardly the portrait of a person whose "only vocation" was love, as Hu Pin Ch'ing, one biographer, suggests. For him and many others, the fact that Li was a woman tells her whole story. He credits her with "unveiling the quivering feminine soul"; his translations quiver along with the soul he creates for her. Is the quiver in the poems?

Compare two poems about parting, one by Li, the other by Liu Yung, a minor official who spent most of his life "lingering along the lovely path to the red tower" and whose main vocation really was love. Both poems are writen in the first person, in the persona of a woman, and though Li's is probably autobiographical, it is clear from Liu's, which is earlier, that she was working in a tradition. The first poem, "Parting", is by Li Ch'ing-chao, the second by Liu Yung (fl. 1034).

Incense cools in the gold lion
My quilt is tossed into a red sea
I get up, carelessly do my hair
Let make-up gather dust in its case
The sun's already to the curtain hook
I dread it—parting and the pain of it
How many things I wanted to say—and didn't
Now I'll grow thin again
Not from wine
Not from autumn melancholy

No! No!
Don't go this time
I'll sing Yang Kuan ten thousand times
To keep you
When you went as far as Wu Ling
Mist enclosed my tower here in Ch'in
And only the river passed
Take pity on me—always watching, waiting
Eyes fixed on a far place
Doomed now again to measure, day by day, a new length of sorrow

"Feng Huang T'ai Shang Yi Ch'ui Hsiao"

Spring came
Cruel green and vexing red
Who cares? Not I!
When the sun rises above the blossoms
And orioles weave through the willows
I'm still asleep
Warm glow fading
Bright hair limp
All day I drag about, uncombed
So what?
Hateful the casual lover who just leaves and sends no word, no letter
I knew it would be like this
Now I'm sorry that from the start
I didn't lock up your fancy saddle
And by the study window
Give you fine paper and an ivory brush
Make you recite and do your work
And follow you all day
Not let you go!
I'd fool with thread and needle, sit by you
And you by me—
Not throw my youth away!

"T'ing Feng P'o"

For nine centuries scholars have argued that Li could not have remarried after the death of her husband. Her love poems are very moving; and the thought that they were perhaps not addressed to her husband, or that she did not

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remain faithful to him after his death, has perhaps seemed culturally and aesthetically offensive. A woman of good family could not have done such a thing. Records of her remarriage must, it is concluded, have been fabricated by male poets jealous of her reputation.

So much attention has been focused on that question that a far more interesting one remains unexplained: how did she manage to move freely in male society? She was educated, respected, and published (although most of her work has not survived) in a time when women of her class—she was the daughter of a high official, and the daughter-in-law of an even higher one—hobbled about on bound feet, were kept illiterate, lived lives of boredom and intrigue within the inner chambers, longing for absent or errant husbands, and were prey to an ever-present mother-in-law.

Li and her husband, on the other hand, were celebrated antiquarians, collectors of rare books, scrolls, and bronzes—they collaborated on a book on ancient bronze inscriptions. They had no children. As Li is almost the only known woman writer in China before the 18th century, one could argue that however much she loved her husband—and there is ample evidence that she did—she did not feel that love was her only vocation. She wrote about what she thought and felt, what she did and saw, just as the other poets of the time did—although, admittedly, her experience was somewhat different.

Her poems suggest that she was a rather truculent intellectual, with a love of words akin to Gertude Stein's. She is famous for a poem that has fourteen reduplicatives in the first three lines. In a poem about spring turbulence, she writes:

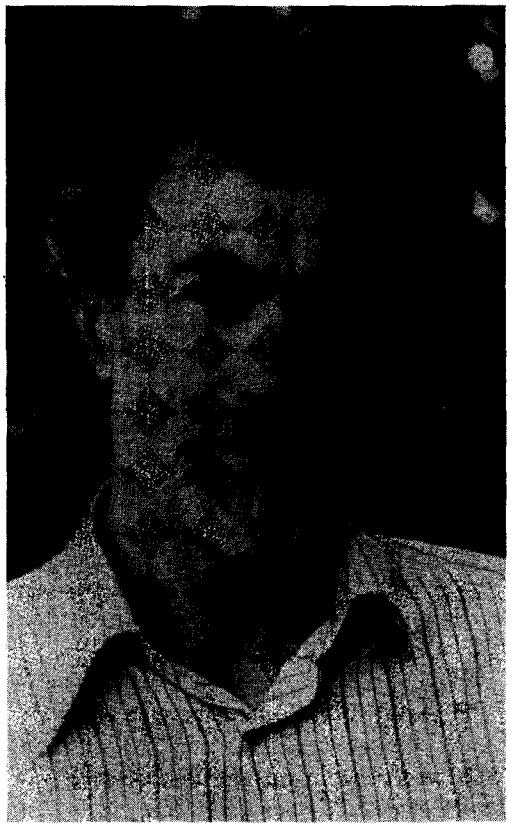
The poem of impossible rhymes is finished
Head clearing as after wine
I taste a special sort of idleness

Rhythm and sound are important. Both repetition and refrain are used to great effect, as can be seen in the following poem written to the tune *T'ien Tzu Ts'ai Sang Tzu*:

Already the banana palm we planted by the window
Shades the whole yard
Shades the whole yard
Leaf by leaf, cluster by cluster
Spreading, furling—overwrought

The echo of the third-watch rain in the afflicted heart
Clear drop by drop
Cold drop by drop
Resonates—anguish—separation
I can't get used to it!

When Li was in her mid-forties in 1126, the Sung capital fell to the Chin Tartars. The following year the emperor was captured. As the Chin advanced, there began a series of flights to one place after another, always just too late. Part of their collection was burned by the invaders, some lost, some sold. At one time in her perigri-



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nations, she and her husband still had some 20,000 books. Eventually, those too were lost.

Meanwhile, the court fled south. With what was left of China, the Southern Sung Dynasty was established under a new emperor who, understandably, had little interest in ransoming the old. In the midst of this turmoil, Li's husband died. At the same time, her father was disgraced, and she herself had some political difficulties. Within a period of about two years, her entire life had collapsed. Several of the poems about the death of her husband survive; "Wu Ling Ch'un" is probably the most famous:

The wind has dropped leaving the earth fragrant with fallen flowers
I know it's late, but what's the use of doing my hair?
Things go on, all but you! Everything is finished
And all I had to say has turned to tears

Along the Suan, I hear, it's still spring—
If only I could take the skiff there!
But I'm afraid—that light boat in the Suan—
How could it carry so much sorrow?

Li definitely spent some years in Hangchou, the new capital. There, in a poem about the Lantern Festival, she reminisces:

In Chung-chou in the good days
There was no end of time behind girls' doors
To mark the date
We dressed our hair with feathers,
Twisted gold, white silk and willow sprays
Competing in our finery
Now, all is faded, faded
Hair dishevelled, temples grey
Now going out at night
Is not so good as hiding under the bamboo shade
Listening to others laugh and talk

After that, little is known of her, except for that much disputed story of a marriage to a rogue followed by a divorce.

With the Emperor a prisoner and the old capital taken, the Chin were in control of north China; the Chinese, under the new emperor, in a new capital, held the south. Though forced to pay tribute to a foreign power, and much reduced in size, the dynasty thrived, as "Southern Sung", for another 150 years. Viewed by many as a period of unprecedented peace, prosperity, and high cultural achievement, it appeared to others as one of intense humiliation. Hsin Ch'i-chi (1140-1207), the most famous of the Southern Sung *tz'u* poets, was among the latter.

Hsin advocated military action to regain the north. No one listened to him. Traditionally, there were two acceptable ways of dealing with giving advice to a ruler which is not heeded—both with long precedents in Chinese history. Su Shih's continued opposition to policy, with a total disregard for his personal welfare or advancement, is the more Confucian; the other—retirement—more Taoist. Hsin did both. After twenty stormy years in official posts, he withdrew: ". . . to dream about the time of my youth spent in the saddle, and be immersed in the poetry and classics of the ancients."[1] Most of his 600 extant *tz'u* date from these last years.

If in Chang-an old friends ask for me
Say sorrow is congealed with wine in my intestines still
I see only to the horizon, where geese fall from autumn skies
And when I'm drunk, sometimes I vainly play the ch'in

Hsin Ch'i-chi's feelings about his retirement ranged from the melancholy to the defiant:

The shoes I've worn out in a lifetime!
I scoff at the world's work—what a waste for thirty-nine years
Always the official, the wanderer

It could also be cynical:

Tired of office, I want to drift on the river
Plant a thousand orange-trees with my own hand
If you two seek fame in the south-east
Make ten thousand books of poems your career
Take my advice
Don't try to shoot the Nan San tiger
Just look for money and a marquisate

Though still immensely personal and expressive, in the two centuries since *tz'u* had first been taken up by scholars it had come increasingly into the mainstream of Chinese poetic genres. The influence of the singing house had disappeared: music had ceased to be important, and much of it had already been lost. Instead there were rules, and an ever-increasing use of allusion.

One must remember that the literate in China had been, for millennia, an homogeneous group. They studied the same classics, memorised the same poems, and led very similar lives. Identifying with an official of the 3rd century B.C., for example, Liu Yung wrote in the 10th.

I feel Sung Yu's despair
When, reaching the river,
He saw the ranges to be crossed

Chinese poetry resonates through centuries with this sort of shared feeling and experience. Allusions were therefore rarely obscure. They evoked a well-known story, which in turn served to turn a simple image into a multi-faceted one.

A closer look at an allusion—to seaweed and *lu* fish—which Hsin Ch'i-chi used frequently may make clear how this works. It is explained in the following lines from a poem of Hsin's about building a house for his retirement:

Intent on cloud and mountain
My whole life
I scoffed at officials
Who stayed in office until the end—
Weary of purpose, one should retire,
Seek repose in time—

[1] Irving Y. Lo, *Hsin Ch'i-chi* (Twayne Publishers, 1971), p. 33.

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No, not simply for the taste of seaweed and lu *fish:*
When autumn settles along the river
See how the geese evade the bow-strings?
Returning boats avoid the backwash?

The allusion, which by Hsin's time had already been popular for centuries and had acquired the patina of previous usage is to Chang Han (Chang Chi Yin), an official of the 3rd century. In a 5th-century work, "A New Account of the Tales of the World", Chang is singled out as the only worthy minister who left office at the peak of his power, and avoided the terrible reverses of fortune experienced by the others. Only Chang Han "felt the autumn wind and turned toward home",[2] and lived to enjoy the delicacies of his native region: *lu* fish and seaweed. The story can be alluded to by mentioning Chang Han, or through synecdoche, by naming any of the elements in the story: the autumn wind, *lu* fish, seaweed. Here, from another of Hsin's poems is a more subtle use of the same allusion:

Old age comes, feeling and taste go
We drink at parting
And fear the flowing years,
Count the autumn festivals
When the full moon
Did not shine on our reunion!
The river doesn't care—
Nor the West wind—
They only speed your boat away. . . .
*Late autumn seaweed—*lu *fish along the river*
Deep in the night, the lamps of children, fishing

In yet another use of the same story, Hsin expresses some ambivalence about retiring:

Don't say lu *fish are ready to be minced*
Even if the west wind blows,
Would Chang Chi Yin go home,
Seek land, and build his house?

It is conventional in poems of retirement to write of one's surroundings. Hsin wrote of the place he built for himself in particularly moving detail.

At East Mountain, I'll remodel the thatched hut
So all the large windows facing the water open

[2] Translated by Richard Mather, *A New Account of the Tales of the World* (University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 78.

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I'll fish from a skiff
But first, I should plant willows
Build fences to protect bamboo

or

The east bank has little green, too little shade
I should plant more willows over there

He wrote in fun about losing his teeth, using the Taoist paradox of the soft overcoming the hard; he poked fun at Buddist abstinence; at the feigned sorrow of young poets; at himself. He wrote about love and wine, and, increasingly, about old age: "What is a man to do when white hair mocks him?" Many poems are casual—the introduction gives you the sense of a chance encounter with a friend. The following lines, for instance, are from a poem prefaced: "Returning from O Lakes sick, I got up to write this."

Flushed lotus flop, like drunks, one on the other
White birds bring no word, I resign myself to melancholy

Over books, I sigh and sigh
Nothing to do but nothing
A hill, a valley . . . scenery enough. . . .
How weak I've grown
Lately, I can't even climb the stairs

The complete Sung *tz'u* have been collected. They number some 20,000 lyrics by over 1,300 poets. The appeal of what they wrote, whether about the trivial or the cosmic, about "fresh shoots and sprouts of a spring dish" or death and parting, lies in the intensely personal expression of someone whose life lay elsewhere—soldier, statesman, emperor, monk, philosopher, historian, reformer. The marvels of the capital and the court of the great Khan described by Marco Polo were what remained of the Sung culture after one of their inventions—gunpowder—had been successfully used against them, and all China came for the first time under foreign rule.

THE SUNG GENTLEMAN refused to serve the Mongols. He went into retirement to write and paint and rue the loss of China. The loss of a kingdom was not new. Li Yü, last king of the Southern T'ang, had lost all to the rising Sung centuries before. He wrote:

Lush wisteria embracing sculptured jade—
What use had we for the arts of war?

These lines the Sung gentleman may well have contemplated, paraphrased, or written on a painting when all was lost.

In Memory of a Gardener

(For Rachel)

Sbolci, Giulio; via di Montebene, Settignano;
Occupation gardener; passion the land he worked.
Has left that stony soil for God knows where.

You served a scrap of land and its *signora*;
Took care of her tenants much as your patience tended
Lemons and roses grown for your *signora*.
You reminded us once, when our holiday selves
Had been growing for years in your care, and we had forgotten,
That one of us, when she came to stay that first time,
Had drooped in long despair in the hot abroadness:
"*Era piccina piccina. Eh, mi ricordo!*
Piangeva piangeva piangeva, due tre giorni."

Dear Giulio, our belated candle burned
Under an English virtuoso's triumph
Of Gothic vaulting fit for Paradise,
While flower and blossom filled the City squares
At noontime on a day of air as blue
And clean as Tuscan air,
Not the eternal *nebbia* you imagined.

Perhaps—God knows—with whatever it is that rises
From candles burned in churches,
The wallflower scent has risen
To tell you we remember you with love.

Julian Brown (1923-1987)

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Books Encountered

The Emancipated Society: State Authority and Individual Freedom. By RODNEY ATKINSON. Computaprint Publishing (4 Sands Road, Swalwell, Newcastle upon Tyne), £10.95.

Densely argued case for (a) replacing Left-Right dichotomy by a distinction between "dependent" and "emancipated" societies; (b) reducing State control and influence; (c) banning monopolies of capital, labour, and the professions; (d) using the market to reassert popular dominance. The diagnosis is often shrewd; the prognosis faintly echoes G. K. Chesterton's distributism.

Civilising Caliban: The Misuse of Art 1875-1980. By FRANCES BORZELLO. Routledge, £15.95.

Unfair, misguided, but exhilarating attack on efforts to "civilise the masses" with high art. Ms Borzello lampoons the Arts Council for mistrusting "community arts"—even when they disfigure town walls with instant, amateurish, agit-prop junk. True, bureaucrats chasing avant-garde pseudery are comic: but public access to Old Masters and great music is an achievement, not a paternalist crime.

The Shifting Point: Forty Years of Theatrical Exploration 1946-1987. By PETER BROOK. Methuen, £14.95.

Chronological collation of the author's thoughts-at-the-time on his various exploits, based largely on articles, introductions, interviews, etc. Very practical hands-on comments; very chirpy, very revealing. The index and illustrations are exemplary too.

The British General Election of 1987. By DAVID BUTLER and DENNIS KAVANAGH. Macmillan, £29.50, paper £14.95.

Professor Butler's twelfth anatomy of a national vote (including the 1975 referendum) and his fourteenth contribution to a series which has covered thirteen elections. Breath-taking industry, exhaustive expertise, complex conclusions. The North tended to vote Labour; Conservatives held surprising cities; the Alliance lost the poor; Mrs Thatcher is changing Britain's political agenda.

The Worm Forgives the Plough. By JOHN STEWART COLLIS. Introduction by MICHAEL HOLROYD. Barrie & Jenkins, £15.95.

Beautifully printed in two Gill typefaces, with nostalgic illustrations, 32 in colour, 143 in line and tone, this reissue of a thoughtful, horny-handed account of working on the land in the 1940s will please all admirers of Adrian Bell and dislikers of factory farming: but it includes the drudgery as well as the Rowland Hilder picturesquerie.

Graham Greene: On The Frontier. By MARIA COUTO. Macmillan, £27.50.

Difficult to say much new on this subject, but Mrs Couto succeeds. From an Indian background, she examines "politics and religion in the novels", finding threads through to present-day quirks. The best part is a transcribed interview; the worst, some of the recent reprinted letters to the press.

An Ocean Apart: The Relationship between Britain and America in the Twentieth Century. By DAVID DIMBLEBY and DAVID REYNOLDS. BBC Books/Hodder & Stoughton, £14.95.

Transatlantic jumbo: a not very surprising but quite sizeable accompaniment to the television series. The Ocean, it suggests, is narrower than the Channel, but "the links with continental Europe may come to seem as appropriate to new generations of Britons as those with the United States seemed to Britain's leaders after World War Two."

Green Pages: The Business of Saving the World. Edited by JOHN ELKINGTON, TOM BURKE, and JULIA HAILES. Routledge, £14.95.

Useful handbook by nearly 50 contributors, with magazine layout, to help the ecologically-minded make sensible choices of consumer goods, jobs, holidays, political pressure, diet, investment, etc. All human life science is here. . . .

The Geopolitics of Super Power. By COLIN S. GRAY. University Press of Kentucky, £26.00

The founder-president of the US National Institute for Public Policy examines four options for security: passive containment, active ditto, Fortress America, and "rollback". He backs active containment, de-emphasising nuclear weapons and competing in economics, politics, and technology. The Soviet Union, he believes, "is going to be an enemy for a long time to come".

Mr Collins Considered: Approaches to Jane Austen. By IVOR MORRIS. Routledge, £16.95.

Delightful, witty, and shrewd investigation of Jane Austen's *Weltanschauung* by an English don who is also a Free Church minister. Mr Collins, you remember, was the cleric who proposed to Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*: she thought him "a conceited, pompous, narrow-minded, silly man". But he had a point. So does Ivor Morris.

Selected Prose. By EDWIN MUIR. Chosen, Introduced, and with a Memoir by GEORGE MACKAY BROWN. John Murray, £15.00.

The Memoir is brief, but vividly regretful; the prose will hardly set Orkney alight. It offers sidelights on the poet, however, and on the Kafka translator, and so is probably worth preserving.

The Countryside in Question. By HOWARD NEWBY. Hutchinson, £14.95, paper £7.95.

The author (not the novelist P.H.) is Professor of Sociology at the University of Essex. His book, based on an eponymous TV series, raises challenging issues: what should, what can, be done about a dwindling, suburbanised, prairie-infested, tripper-filled, and perhaps agriculturally "set-aside" rural heritage? "Strategic planning", he suggests. . . .

Country Matters. By IAN NIALL. Unwin Hyman, £7.95.

Timely reissue of the 1984 selection of nostalgic pieces by the author of "Countryman's Notes" in *Country Life*.

Galileo: Heretic. By PIETRO REDONDI. Translated by RAYMOND ROSENTHAL. Allen Lane, £17.95.

Meticulous English version of a cardinal contribution to scientific and ecclesiastical history, arguing that Galileo's trial (concerning astronomical doctrine) was a cover-up for the more serious charge (revealed by a newly discovered earlier document) that his philosophy contradicted the Eucharist—for which he could have been burned. Fascinatingly plausible.

He and She: Men in the Eighties. By YVETTE WALCZAK. Routledge, £22.50.

More systematic counterpart to Anna Ford's *Men*, based on interviews with 51 men, one of them in *his* eighties, and at least eight identifiably from ethnic minorities. The main conclusion is confusion about relations with women.

Peter Brook: A Theatrical Casebook. Compiled by DAVID WILLIAMS. Methuen, £8.95.

Companion-piece to Brook's own writings, noted above: essays, reviews, etc., by Kenneth Tynan, Martin Esslin, Charles Marowitz, John Lahr, Jean-Claude Carrière, *e tutti quanti*, plus some further interviews by Brook. No index, nothing on the films: why?

R.M.

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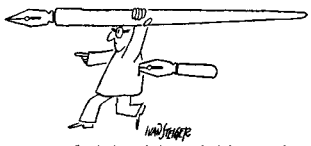
MEMOIR

On Not Getting a Ph.D.

The Manuscript that Failed—By ELIE KEDOURIE



THE FIRST EDITION of my book on the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1921, entitled *England and the Middle East*, was published in 1956, and reprinted in 1978. From the time when it first came out there have been references and allusions, both verbal and written, to the pre-publication history of this book. The new edition provides an opportunity to set down the details of this history, which is of some interest, both in itself and for the light it sheds on the historiography of the modern Middle East in recent decades.

I wrote the book at St Antony's College, Oxford, which had elected me as a senior scholar in October 1951. As such, I was registered as a candidate for the D.Phil. degree and the typescript, which I had finished writing during the long vacation of 1953, was accordingly submitted to the University. In due course, the Board of the Faculty of Modern History appointed as examiners H. A. R. Gibb, Laudian Professor of Arabic in the University, and James Joll, Fellow and Sub-Warden of St Antony's. Thursday, 3 December, was set for the oral examination.

On the afternoon of the appointed day I went to the Examination Schools where the *viva* was to take place. My second visit to this building took place some three or four years ago when I gave a public lecture under the auspices of the Faculty of Modern History. On this latter occasion, my impression was of a dignified structure, by no means oppressive, with a neo-Gothic style in harmony with the architecture of many colleges in its neighbourhood. But on that December afternoon in 1953, perhaps because the neglect which it must have suffered during the War years had not yet been repaired, the building, seemingly deserted save for an elderly porter ensconced in one corner of the vast entrance hall, looked dingy and depressing. He introduced me into an equally dingy, dimly-lighted room where I was bidden to sit at a table facing my two examiners.

Joll, of course, I knew as a member of my college whom in the course of two years at St Antony's I had had occasion to meet many times. Gibb I hardly knew, having met him only once or twice before, and that briefly. The impression I had carried from these fleeting encounters, for what it was worth, was of someone who was self-confident, masterful not to say imperious, and, I suspected, given to strong opinions and powerful emotions. From the start it became clear that Gibb would take the principal part in my interrogation, and in fact his fellow examiner proved to have little to say and remained mostly silent.

It soon became apparent that Gibb was much displeased with the work before him. But his disagreement with what I had written, though clearly vehement, was puzzling, not to say incoherent. The two years I had spent on *England and the Middle East* had, if nothing else, schooled me in the logic of historical narrative. In this logic, chronology and detail are of the essence; detail, again, had to fit in with detail, and no one detail could stand on its own. The building up of details, on which narrative depends was, I had come to see, impossible unless there was evidence, and unless, moreover, one piece of evidence cohered with another; unless, further, inference followed inference without being, so to speak, forced. I had come, therefore, to believe that if an historical narrative was to be demolished, either the evidence on which it relied had to be discredited, or shown to admit of another—and better—interpretation, or else new evidence brought forward which could change the whole aspect of a question.

GIBB, I WAS SHOCKED to find, seemed little interested in the detail which made up my narrative, in its chronological sequence, or in the conclusions which had to follow if my evidence and inferences were trustworthy and correct. For instance, I thought I had established that there were very strong grounds for thinking that Damascus had not been actually conquered by the Sharifian forces at the beginning of October 1918, but rather that Allenby had forbidden his troops to enter the city after they had routed the Ottoman army. This was meant to enable the Sharif Faysal, commander of the so-called Northern Arab Army, to make a triumphant entry and claim the city as his trophy.

If true, this was a discovery of some importance. But I was shocked to find that when, in the course of our exchanges, I tried to draw attention to the substantial and far-reaching consequences of Allenby's action, Gibb impatiently and angrily brushed all this aside. Angry indeed he was, his face all flushed, his tone exasperated. The candidate sitting before him was in no position, even if he had wanted, to retort in kind. But he did not want to. What remains with me from that afternoon long ago was the certainty which possessed

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me fairly early in the proceedings that argument with Gibb —I mean argument about evidence and inference, as this is understood among historians—was vain and useless.

Another incident which I vividly recollect reinforced this conviction. Gibb had come armed with a copy of Philip Graves's biography of Sir Percy Cox, who had played an important part in the affairs of Mesopotamia during and after the 1914 War. I was not unaware of its existence, since it was referred to in my work. At one point, Gibb opened the book and quoted some statement of Cox's, meaning decisively to confound me. This made it obvious that my examiner had no idea of treating the record of Cox's doings and sayings simply as evidence, exactly on a par with other evidence, to be considered and critically weighed by the historian. For Gibb, Sir Percy Cox was an authority, while for the historian, his *dramatis personae* can never be authorities, only exhibits.

After two hours or so of this fruitless palaver I was allowed to go. It was amply clear that my work had failed to find favour with the examiners, and I had now to consider how to proceed. I was in no doubt at all that it was out of the question to introduce the changes which they desired, and without which they would not recommend award of the degree. But the College had given me a scholarship for two years running, and had even paid my examination fees. I felt therefore under an obligation to do nothing without consulting the Warden, F. W. Deakin. I went to see him immediately following the oral and told him that I wanted to withdraw from the examination. I followed this with a letter on 5 December. I wrote:

"I have been thinking about the thesis. I feel more and more inclined to the solution I suggested while talking to you on Thursday, that is to withdraw altogether. I will however do nothing before receiving your advice, but I want to say why this solution commends itself to me.

"Again and again during the oral examination, Professor Gibb kept on raising points on mere matters of opinion, and never once raised a question of scholarship, minute or substantial. The line which I understand he would like me to take, would be to make the 'awakening' of the Oriental peoples, and the supposed influence of the 'people' of this country on foreign questions justify the policy that was adopted then. These points were, of course, considered in my work, as far as the evidence at my disposal allowed; what I did was to indicate who, in fact, among those who carried out policy believed in this 'awakening' and this alleged influence, and therefore conducted their policy in the light of this belief. More than this I cannot do. And to do more I consider irrelevant, beyond proof, a species of apologetics in which I cannot indulge.

"I recounted how things happened and buttressed my account with evidence which can be tested by the ordinary standards of historical criticism. Professor Gibb had either to demolish my evidence or to revise his opinions. He has done neither, but has used his opinions in order to by-pass my evidence and stay clear of any question of its credibility and worth. A particularly clear example of this lies in his assertion time and again, that the rising of 1920 in Mesopotamia was a 'peasant revolt', that the Sharifians were wanted by the country, that without them the country could not have been governed. When you have a candidate who asserts the exact opposite, and who brings forward reasons for his assertions, you have first to show these reasons worthless, before you can proceed blandly with your original assertions.

"Professor Gibb has done nothing of the kind. Instead, he has appealed to the spirit of the times, and to the fact that we live in the twentieth and not in the nineteenth century in order to prove how wrong-headed I am. I write these things not in order to complain, but to explain why I think a withdrawal is best. Professor Gibb has opinions about the Middle East. These opinions are well-known. It is in their light that he has judged my work. These opinions, which I am not prepared to share, relate not only to the Middle East but to fundamental political attitudes. I said during the examination that, from the point of view of the British in 1920, the Sharifians in Syria were carrying on sedition in Mesopotamia, and that sedition should not be rewarded. Professor Gibb's version of this is that the Sharifians in Syria had tasted power and therefore power had to be given to them in Mesopotamia.

"I hope you see where the disagreement lies. This is of course a genuine and legitimate disagreement, but not one which can serve as a ground for passing academic judgment on my work."

THAT SAME Thursday evening James Joll wrote me a long letter amplifying points made at the oral, and declaring his agreement with Gibb's criticisms. My reply of 13 December is useful in setting out fully the examiners' objections and my reaction to them.

"I have considered very carefully the comments on my work you so kindly sent me after the oral examination. I have one general remark to make at the outset which applies to them and to those of Professor Gibb.

"I have written an historical narrative of particular events, an elucidation of specific causes and detailed effects, of particular acts and their visible consequences. Any valid criticism of my work therefore must show that a particular cause which I claim to be efficient was inefficient or inexistent, or that a particular effect which I claim follows from a certain cause does not, in fact, follow, or can be shown, logically, not to follow. This kind of criticism has not been forthcoming. Instead, you have asked me to add to the causes of the events which I describe, two general causes, which you say must have exercised an influence over all events, namely, the general ideas of 1918, and 'the crisis in British imperial thinking'.

"Before I can accept these causes as valid and efficient, I must test them by the criterion I have proposed. I must ask, does any event with which I am concerned remain unexplained, or any decision mysterious, if I do not appeal to your two general causes? I must answer in the negative; and unless you show me how any event, or series of events absolutely requires the explanations you propose, I must decline them as unnecessary. If I were to write about the ideas of Smuts, Wilson, Cecil and the crisis in British imperial thinking at large without relating them to the events I describe—and I do

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not see how they can be related—I would be open to the imputation of being a doctrinaire seeking excuses and apologies, and of making nebulous general ideas take the place of the vital play and counterplay of the wills of men who have power and who can sway the destinies of other men. I am not inclined to write a Whig interpretation of 1919; and this is, in essence, what I am required to do.

"You say you agree with Professor Gibb's criticisms. Professor Gibb, if you will recall, asked me at the oral what else the British Government could do when confronted with the pressure of public opinion and the awakening of the Oriental peoples overseas. Can this pressure and this awakening be proved? The answer must depend on detailed evidence, which must either exist or not exist. Since you do not indicate what the evidence is, since I have not found it in my researches, and since you do not say that I have overlooked any particular evidence, I must assume that it does not exist. If the answer is, on the other hand, not dependent on evidence, then it becomes speculation, where any man's opinion is as good as another's. I have eschewed such speculations. You have been pressing me to pursue them.

"Take Allenby's attitude to the Syrian question. In my work, I reported his alarmist despatches on the potentialities of the Sharifians for mischief, I described the forces at his disposal and those of the Sharifians; all these things are matters of evidence. I set out the evidence and refrained from comment. Professor Gibb seized on this and proceeded to instruct me in all the anxieties which must have pressed on Allenby's mind: the riots in Jaffa, the demonstrations in Egypt, the sedition of India, the low morale of the British troops at the time—what else, Professor Gibb asked, could Allenby do but be alarmed at the Sharifian threat of trouble? But how does he know that these things were on Allenby's mind? Has he any evidence? None. It is pure speculation, which anyone who may like will call apologetics and white-washing.

"I am asked to emulate such proceedings. I do not feel inclined to do so. Had you shown that I am mistaken in my description of British policies, or of the events connected therewith, I would have bowed to your criticism; had you explained in what way the ideas of Smuts resulted in the installation of Faisal in Damascus, or the crisis in British imperial thinking in his installation in Baghdad, I would have gladly accepted your explanations: and it is only criticisms and explanations of this order that I can accept. The rest is speculation.

"Further, it is not true that I am concerned only with the actions of British officials in the Middle East, and not with the decisions of the British Government in London. Indeed I am concerned with little else: the whole work is an attempt at their elucidation, decison by decision, and step by step. If you will show me in detail how the elucidation fails I can try to do better; general opinions and blanket explanations are neither here nor there, and I cannot take notice of them.

"It is true that it was I who submitted my work to official academic judgment, and I must accept the consequences of my actions. Here, fortunately, I can choose between different consequences. You will, I am sure, appreciate that my choice will tend towards what will do least damage and least violence to my work."

THE EXCHANGES at the oral, and James Joll's letter, gave me a fairly full idea of my examiners' objections, and what I had to do in order to meet them. Though I had no intention of doing so, I still thought it important to obtain, for the record so to speak, an official statement of these objections. I therefore applied to the Secretary of Faculties at Oxford for a statement which would carry the authority of the Board of the Faculty of Modern History. The Secretary declined to do so, referring me instead to my supervisor, J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, also a Fellow of St Antony's.

After the examination, Wheeler-Bennett had not sought to communicate with his student, and I myself had failed in my attempts to reach him. I now had to trouble him with a letter. It took until 21 February 1954 for him to reply. His letter added nothing to what I had gathered from the oral and James Joll's letter. He did say, however, that he fully agreed with the examiners that the changes they required were necessary. Wheeler-Bennett had read my work before it was submitted to the University, but had at the time neither objected to any of it, nor demurred from its conclusions. I wrote to him on 25 February.

"I only wrote on the recommendation of the Secretary of Faculties, in reply to my request to be supplied with an authoritative statement of the views of the examiners. This you have now given me and I am very grateful to you. My short answer to the examiners is that they have no evidence with which to support their contention that the events which I describe were caused, influenced, or made inevitable by (*a*) "public opinion", (*b*) events in India and Egypt, or (*c*) General Smuts's ideas.

"The kind of history I have written depends on detailed evidence being brought to bear on specific matters. The only criticism I can accept must either demolish my evidence or my use of it, or bring forward other evidence conflicting with mine. This the examiners have not done. When I said that things happened in such and such a manner, the examiners did not counter by saying, No they happened otherwise; they only exclaimed, Oh but what happened was inevitable as public opinion was for it. This is quite irrelevant to my purpose and in any case can neither be proved nor disproved.

"Further, the argument from 'public opinion' is dubious, historically: it is an argument which only seeks to justify, to excuse, and to extenuate; it is a solvent of political and moral responsibility and should be, as such, the last argument which an historian may allow himself either to use or to advocate. To my detailed and patient reconstruction of incidents, events and policies then, the examiners have opposed nebulous speculations at large and have pretended, by virtue only of their academic position, to enforce their opinions on me.

"I was unwise enough to put myself in a position where such opinions could be enforced against me. I must now extricate myself as best I can."

ON THE SAME DAY I wrote to the Secretary of Faculties.

"I have, as you recommended, written to my supervisor and I now have his answer. Kindly inform the Board that the contentions of the examiners appointed by them are at variance with the conclusions—buttressed by evidence—

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presented in my thesis. Since the examiners have neither demolished my evidence, nor provided evidence in support of their contention, I must regard these as mere speculative opinions, and cannot take notice of them. I desire therefore to withdraw my work from the scrutiny of the examiners appointed by the Board."

The Secretary of Faculties must have been somewhat bemused by my letter, for he wrote again, on 1 March, asking whether he was really to understand that I did not wish to accept the Board's offer to resubmit my thesis. I replied on 7 March.

"I am sorry that my letter of February 25 was not as clear as it was meant to be. In view of the observations of the examiners at the oral examination and those they made through my supervisor, I do not care further to expose my work to their opinions. I trust this answers your question, and I request that you kindly communicate this letter as well as my letter of February 25 to the Board."

MY COMPLETE LACK OF CONCERN over the D.Phil. may now surprise. But one of the great strengths of the university education I received had been to inculcate in me the conviction that a good first degree was as good an indication of intelligence and ability as any, and that a doctorate was really a piece of supererogation. It was thus a relief when the Warden of St Antony's very nicely released me from any obligation I might have had to the College, and gave me full liberty to proceed as I thought best.

I had now to see whether the work could at all be published. I was, after all, an unknown author, one moreover whose work had failed to satisfy established and eminent authorities. The previous October I had been appointed an assistant lecturer in the Department of Government at the London School of Economics. The head of the Department was Professor Michael Oakeshott. He knew, of course, that I was presenting a thesis at Oxford. After the examination I naturally told him what transpired, said that I wanted to see the work published, and asked his advice. Michael Oakeshott was a director of Bowes and Bowes, a small publisher with a distinguished list of authors and titles. After he had read *England and the Middle East* he suggested proposing its publication to his fellow directors. I was very grateful to accept, and the thesis was published as it stood, in April 1956.

AS I HAVE SAID, Gibb's way with historical argument and its requirements I found shocking. What, however, puzzled me was the intense anger which my work provoked in him. He clearly objected to it, and clearly thought his objections well-founded but, all the same, why the anger?

In my letter to the Warden I had written that Gibb's opinions about the Middle East were "well-known". I no longer recall, at this distance in time, what exactly I then knew about Gibb's opinions on the modern Middle East. It cannot have extended beyond such gossip as one heard in London and Oxford and the occasional article or book review published in *International Affairs*, the Chatham House organ, and similar publications. It was only later, in the decade preceding the publication of my book *The Chatham House Version* (which came out in 1970), when I was systematically searching out and reading the writings of Arnold J. Toynbee and his associates, and later still, when Gibb's memoranda, prepared for the Foreign Office during the Second World War, became publicly available, that the character of his political judgment was fully brought home to me, and his behaviour on that December afternoon in 1953 became somewhat explicable.

A reading of this material leaves one in no doubt that Gibb harboured strong feelings about contemporary events in the Middle East, and a deep conviction of the guilt of his country in its Middle Eastern, and more generally, its imperial policy. His tone throughout is categorical and strident; no hint of a doubt or a qualification appears. Only someone who was fully and minutely acquainted with the record, and had pondered it deeply, could have the right to hand down such draconian verdicts.

It was, however, manifest that Gibb was not, and could not be acquainted with the detail of diplomatic and political transactions. The detail was to a large extent unavailable to the public when Gibb was writing his fiery denunciations. And, to the extent that it was available, there is no evidence that he had had any critical engagement with it. This did not prevent him from confidently pronouncing about the actions of Great Britain and the United States in the Middle East. But such pronouncements, however fervent and well-intentioned, had no value as historical judgments.

To take an example. In *The Spectator* of 25 November 1938, Gibb reviewed George Antonius's *Arab Awakening*. The book, as is well-known, is a tissue of doubtful historical statements, marshalled to form an apologia for the cause of Arab nationalism. It was a very able, very clever, production, the qualities of which entitled it to a critical scrutiny. The readers of *The Spectator* were offered nothing of the kind. Gibb simply took it for granted that Antonius was telling a true story, one which aroused his indignation—to which he freely gave expression. He agreed with Antonius that the "all-pervading Zionist propaganda" had "virtual control of public opinion in Britain and the West". "What is much worse, however, and genuinely perplexing", he went on:

> "is that a Government which professes the principles of democracy should deceive, and keep on deceiving, its people, firstly by concealing its imperial objects behind a mask of idealism, and subsequently by refusing to disclose both its original commitments to the Arabs and the fact that it has been forced in consequence into a policy which is abhorrent to the traditions of its people and furnishes ammunition to its enemies."

Every single one of these assertions is either historically baseless or question-begging, or else leaves history behind for the rhetoric of political advocacy.

Another example may be cited. In a piece published in 1951,[1] there is a stark contrast set up between Eastern virtue

[1] "Near East Perspective: The Present and the Future", in T. Cuyler Young, ed., *Near Eastern Culture and Society* (Princeton, 1951), pp. 231 and 233.

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and Western depravity. "To regard Gandhi's denunciation of the 'satanic civilisation' of the West", Gibb affirmed,

> "as if it were a mere foible or parenthesis or journalistic exaggeration is a typical piece of Western self-satisfaction and protective delusion. It is the most solemn warning that has yet come out of Asia."

In the remarkable passage of self-incrimination which followed, Gibb was again sweeping and categorical:

> "There is no Eastern nation today that does not denounce, with justified if self-righteous horror, the inhumanity and 'genocide' not only of Germans and Russians but also of Britons and Americans even if under the stress of war. . . . At every level, the contrast between the humanitarian ideals proclaimed by the West and its disregard of humanitarian values in action had produced a profound disbelief in the whole system of Western public and private morality."

Genocide? Britons and Americans? Moral judgment has to be a cool, delicate and discriminating exercise. But the judgment which this passage discloses is heated, gross, and undiscriminating.

THE PAPERS in the Public Record Office illustrate Gibb's political, rather than moral judgment. When war broke out in 1939, Gibb became a member of the Foreign Research and Press Service set up by Chatham House in order to assist the Foreign Office and presided over by Arnold Toynbee. As such, Gibb produced papers and memoranda for the Department on Middle Eastern issues. In these papers he fervently espoused the project of an Arab Federation as the cure for all Middle Eastern ills. Western promotion of an Arab Federation would (he wrote in a paper of December 1942) still the suspicion of British motives "by tangible evidences of sincerity and goodwill". Federation was urgent (he wrote in another paper of November 1943) because otherwise Pan-Arabism, which he described as a violently populist Mahdist movement, would irresistibly sweep the board. Moreover, Arab federation is natural, while separatist tendencies in Arab nationalism are "not inherent forces", but for the most part "the accidental consequences of a forced separation". For Western statesmen to encourage separatism was "a policy of bankruptcy" which could only fan the flames of Pan-Arabism.

Gibb, therefore, proposed breaking up existing political structures and setting up "a close federation to be built up of provinces, viz. Basra, Baghdad, Mosul, Jazira, Aleppo, Damascus, Latakia, Lebanon, Jebel ad-Druze, Palestine, Transjordan, and the Syrian Desert (possibly divided into a northern and a southern province)". All these provinces would be more or less equal and relatively homogeneous, and had developed the habit of cooperation "over a period of many centuries". In this Federation there would be a variety of emirates, republics, councils of Shaikhs, all "without interfering with the supremacy of the elective principle". The Federation, "elastic" and capable of gradual extension, "would hold out to all patriotic Arabs the prospect of the ultimate peaceful union of the whole of Arab Asia"![2]

THE LAST WORD on these absurd and visionary projects can be left to Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary. In a despatch to the British Minister at Jedda of 15 August 1941 (which, as it happens, is filed in the vicinity of yet another pro-Federation paper from Gibb), Eden reported a conversation with the Saudi Arabian Minister in London in which he told Sheikh Hafiz Wahba:

> "Since the days of Muhammad no one had been able to arrive at a satisfactory scheme for Arab federation."[3]

What both his published and unpublished writings disclose, at any rate, is that Gibb was politically committed: he had strong sympathies and equally strong views about the right policies for the Middle East. In itself, this was not objectionable, but the political commitment fatally spilled over into, and encouraged, academic tendentiousness, which is a species of *trahison des clercs*.

Given that Sir Hamilton Gibb's great power and influence in the academic world on both sides of the Atlantic, extended far beyond the field of Islam and Arabic language and literature in which he was knowledgeable, the consequences were clearly lasting and substantial.

MY BOOK ON *England and the Middle East* is a work of history. It is, in other words, of necessity backward-looking, and offers no recipes or recommendations for future policy. But the picture of what took place in the Levant and Mesopotamia during and immediately after the 1914 War, as the record disclosed it, was such as to arouse the worst forebodings.

British policy, with which I was mostly concerned, seemed to me based on shaky, if not wholly mistaken, assumptions, while its executants were, with few exceptions, lost in illusions or else committed to this or that Middle Eastern cause, in fact much like my own committed examiner. If one wanted to go forward from 1921—where my narrative stopped—one could hardly help being pessimistic about a region the political arrangements of which were so ramshackle, the political and social institutions so weak, so exposed to the violence of ideological adventures, and to the voracious cupidities of political and military figures whom there was little to restrain. Rereading the book 30 years after its publication, years of blood, treachery, and despotic rule, its foreshadowings and forbodings do not seem out of place or even exaggerated. Yet in 1956 it was possible for a reviewer to query this view of the Middle East:

> "Throughout the book [wrote Albert Hourani] there are dark hints that the chaos to which British policy was bound

[2] F.O. 371/31338, 7433/49, and F.O. 371/39988, 2768/41.

[3] F.O. 371/27044, 4761/53. A paper by Gibb on Arab federation of 9 June 1944 is in the same file, 3824/53. Crown Copyright Records quoted by permission of the Controller, Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

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> to lead has in fact come about, and in particular that the establishment of independent Arab states handed over religious and racial minorities to 'the lust for power of discontented and ambitious men'. But judged by the standards of an imperfect world, the Arab states have not done so badly in dealing with one of the most difficult political problems. In Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan religious peace may be precarious, but it exists."[4]

Would that Hourani had been right!—the Middle East would have been spared much heart-break and much spilt blood. It would not have been the wilderness of tigers it now manifestly is.

For myself, I was always sceptical of such visions. As I put it in an article (published in *The Cambridge Journal* in 1952) which considered the fate of Armenians and other so-called minorities in the Middle East, "persecutors and persecuted, hunters and hunted are in the grip of the powers of darkness. . . ."[5] This article, and one of the previous year on the British and the French in the Levant during the Second World War (also in *The Cambridge Journal*) appeared under the pseudonym Antiochus.

The Antiochus I meant was the unfortunate hero of Racine's play *Bérénice*, who utters the famous line, all desolate magnificence: *Dans l'orient désert quel devint mon ennui*. It was the melancholy with which this line is instinct which led me to choose this particular pseudonym, in order to hint at the feelings which the ruinous condition of the modern Middle East inspired in one. Famous lines from an English poet I would also often in those years quote to myself, those sombre concluding lines from "Dover Beach" in which Matthew Arnold lamented:

> *. . . we are here as on a darkling plain*
> *Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,*
> *Where ignorant armies clash by night.*

It was then, about 1952, that I acquired a recording of "Dover Beach" sung by the baritone John Langstaff to a setting by Samuel Barber.

I first met Maurice Cowling a few months after the publication of *England and the Middle East*. What he wrote many years later confirms that I am not mistaken in the description of my state of mind. As he recalled in 1980, my conviction at the time, derived from what had been done in the Middle East, was that "English government was conducted in so innocent a fashion that a day of reckoning was unavoidable".[6]

As a work of history, *England and the Middle East* depends on evidence. The evidence I had at my disposal when I was writing was much more scanty than what became available from the mid-1960s onwards, when students were able to consult the papers relating to the First World War and its aftermath at the Public Record Office in London, and elsewhere. Had these sources been at my disposal in 1951-53, *England and the Middle East* would obviously have been a different, and most probably a longer work. In historical narrative, detail is of the essence; and the detail to hand fifteen years after its completion was much more copious. Also, matters which I had been compelled to leave unexamined, because lack of sufficient detail left them in obscurity, would have been discussed with some confidence.

But if the book would have been longer and more detailed, it does not follow that its structure, as it now stands,[7] or its conclusions, would have been destroyed. Over the decades since its publication, as opportunity offered, or freedom from teaching and other commitments allowed, in one way or another I examined the new material extensively and published an appreciable number of works to supplement the account I had offered in the thesis of 1953, and clarified some of the then unavoidable obscurities. To supplement and clarify, happily, by no means meant to supersede.[8]

All in all, there was quite a large body of new evidence with which to confront my earlier conclusions. It was therefore gratifying that somehow or other I had been able to make such good use of the exiguous material I was able to put together in the early 1950s, that it had yielded results which stood up well to the subsequent test, and that I had dug for myself no pits out of which I would have had painfully and shamefacedly to clamber. One essay, that on the capture of Damascus (which first appeared in 1964 in the inaugural number of *Middle Eastern Studies*), gave the kind of pleasure which comes from fitting the last pieces of a jigsaw. With the help of new evidence, the essay incontrovertibly established the conclusion which in *England and the Middle East* had rested on evidence which, though strong, was circumstantial. This was that Allenby had deliberately abandoned Damascus to Faisal and his men—a contention which Gibb, as has been seen, had impatiently, dismissively, and inexplicably brushed aside.

Discussing the beginnings of the Eastern Question, I wrote that the policy of George Canning, the Foreign Secretary, towards the insurrection in Greece was dictated not so much

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[4] *International Affairs* (October 1956), p. 512.

[5] The article is now included in *The Chatham House Version* (1970).

[6] *Maurice Cowling, Religion and Public Doctrine in Modern England* (Cambridge, 1980), p. xxii.

[7] It has just been republished by Mansell Publishing (London) and in the USA by Westview Press (Boulder, Colorado).

[8] It is useful and convenient to set out here these other writings: "Cairo and Khartoum on the Arab Question, 1915-1918", "The Capture of Damascus, 1 October 1918", "The Kingdom of Iraq: A Retrospect", all included in *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle-Eastern Studies* (1970), "Sir Mark Sykes and Palestine, 1915-16" in *Arab Political Memoirs and Other Studies* (1974), "Colonel Lawrence and his Biographers" and "The Surrender of Medina, January 1919", both in *Islam in the Modern World and Other Studies* (1980), "The Iraqi Shi'is and their Fate", in Martin Kramer, ed., *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution* (1987).

To these shorter studies one has to add a whole book devoted to one central issue which figures in *England and the Middle East*, and the size of which (330 pages) gives an idea of the much lengthier treatment which the availability of new material makes both necessary and possible—*In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth: The McMahon-Husayn Correspondence and its Interpretations* (1976). The relation of this book to *England and the Middle East*, and how the later work grew out of the earlier is examined in an essay, "In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth: Genesis of a History", first published in 1979, and included in *Islam in the Modern World*.

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by a clear-cut attitude towards the Ottoman Empire itself, as by a preoccupation with the European balance of power, and that "perhaps only by forgetting the existence of the Ottoman Empire and remembering that of Austria that George Canning's policy can be understood. . . ." In a monograph, on "British Policy Towards the 'Greek Question'" (1821-1832), one historian[9] questions whether such a judgment (which derives from the work of H. W. V. Temperley and other historians) can be sustained. By a detailed scrutiny of the evidence, he shows that Canning was not moved primarily by balance-of-power considerations, but by an ideological *parti-pris* in favour of Greek nationalism, a *parti-pris* incompatible with the maintenance of the European balance, and indeed ultimately with the existence of a stable society of states. Canning's philhellenism was an abiding element in his attitude to the Ottoman Empire, and some verses on the fallen state of Greece which he wrote while a schoolboy at Eton do express the sympathies and leanings of the statesman:

> *This was thy state! but oh! how chang'd thy fame,*
> *And all thy glories fading into shame.*
> *What? that thy bold, thy freedom-breathing land*
> *Should crouch beneath a tyrant's stern command!*

If the historian is right—and his argument is clear and cogent—then Canning must rank as a precursor of those British statesmen and officials dealing with the Middle East from 1914 onwards in whom the ideological impulse or temptation proved so strong, and so far-reaching in its consequences.

There is a letter of 1826 by Metternich criticising Canning's policy of mediating between the Ottoman Empire and its rebellious Greek-speaking subjects—a letter the contemporary relevance of which will be immediately apparent:

"What [wrote Metternich] would be the fate of Europe—that of civilisation if the doctrine of the *dédoublement des Etats* were ever admitted by the last supporters of the peace of nations? How can a man of sense advance so subversive a contention, or at least permit himself the attempt to advance it? Is England then ready to *regard as a Power equal* in rights to that of the King the first Irish Club which declares itself the *Insurgent Government of Ireland*? To regard as *fondée dans son droit* the French Power which would accept the office of mediator by reason of the sole fact that the invitation had been addressed to it by the *Irish Government*. . . . Whither does this absurdity not lead us?"

[9] Steven Schwartzberg, "The Lion and the Phoenix: British Policy Towards the 'Greek Question' 1821-1832", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, April and July 1988.

THERE REMAINS to say a word about the terms "England" and "the English", which figure both in the title and the body of my work. On its publication in 1956, this usage attracted the approval of one reviewer, Christopher Sykes, who declared "enjoyable" my aversion to the idiotic term "British". But another reviewer, John Connell, denying that he was "touchily Scotch about this", sternly pointed out that "it is a usage as incorrect as it is familiar outside this country".

In using these terms, however, it was far from my thoughts either to praise the Englishry which Sykes declared to be a lost cause, or to cause offence to the Scots. One of my reasons is hinted at by Connell who points out that the usage is familiar outside this country. In using the words, "England" and "English", I did in fact seek to recall something of the flavour and the style of diplomacy and international relations in a period when so many of those who dealt with Britain and the British Empire or who lived in its shadow persisted in calling them England and English.

There was another reason. One of the first books I read when I began to study the "Eastern Question" and to learn how to do diplomatic history was H. W. V. Temperley's *England and the Near East* (1936) for which I came to have great admiration. The title of my own book was thus also meant to be a token of this admiration. But to have made this explicit might, I thought, have smacked of presumption.

Recognition Scene

How can I praise you when
to praise is to mock you who
descend on me like music; and yet
no music stranger;

none more like velvet, or
like wine on the palate. No,
like water rather; colourless, and
as clear as daylight,

empty as daylight; yet
that emptiness makes you all
I treasure; and I spoil by my speech,
not knowing better.

Yet I will learn how to
do honour to all you mean
to me, the always talking in vain
one; learn from all you

never reveal to me
in so many words; and yet
can tell to me in silence . . . and I
can heed you . . . Silence.

John Holloway

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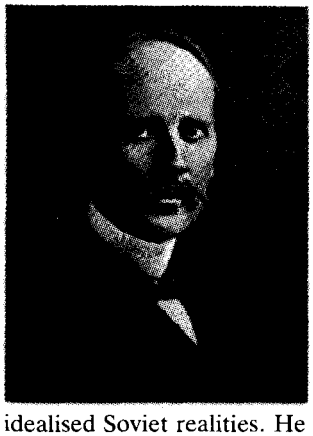
FROM THE OTHER SHORE

Why Did Romain Rolland Keep Silent?

A Russian Critic Challenges "Fellow-Travellerism"



AS AN *AFICIONADO* of Romain Rolland's works, I have often been the object of puzzling questions. How could this French writer, with his keen moral sense, have ignored the tragic events in our life? Is it possible that he knew nothing of the unprecedented repressions of the 1930s, of Stalin's despotism? Or perhaps he knew, but kept silent?

It is not as simple as all that, of course. Rolland never idealised Soviet realities. He received various kinds of information from this country, including numerous letters from Soviet readers, and coolly analysed all the "pros" and "cons". But he stuck to the position he first expressed in 1917. In the article "Greetings to the liberated and liberating Russia!" Rolland wrote:

> "May our example edify you! Remember the French Convent that devoured its own children like Saturn! . . . Save all your forces for the defence of the sacred cause you are representing!"

The cause of the Russian Revolution was, and forever remained, sacred to Rolland. But in subsequent years he had many an occasion to recall his warning of 1917.

I had the opportunity to study Rolland's Paris archives for a month in 1967. His widow, Maria Pavlovna, was kind enough to give me her help, advice and permission to publish excerpts from the writer's letters and diaries with the exception of his 1935 "Moscow diary". The excerpts included here have never appeared in print before.

During the three weeks Rolland spent in the Soviet Union he met with Stalin and talked to him frankly. He expressed his concern about the repressions and tried to show how detrimental they were to the Soviet Union's prestige abroad. In reply, Stalin painted a sinister picture: conspirators against Soviet power everywhere, new plots being constantly exposed. . . . Rolland could neither disbelieve what he was told, nor suppress his doubts. The only concession he managed to get, as a result of that conversation, was Stalin's consent to let the exiled French anarchist Victor Serge leave the country. Rolland didn't sympathise with Serge at all, incidentally.

Rolland's days in the USSR were spent with readers and writers. Young Komsomols and Moscow Metro builders. His impressions were, by and large, positive, although he noted

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IT WILL COME TO PASS, *the ironies of history being what they are, that from Moscow, which for 70 frenetic years conducted the agit-prop which "won over to the Soviet cause" innumerable Western intellectuals (naive, enthusiastic, willing to believe), will come bitter indictments of just those fellow-travellers on the charge of having betrayed the truth about the Soviet tragedy.*

The author of this reconsideration of the case of Romain Rolland (and Jean-Richard Bloch) is TAMARA MOTYLYOVA, *and it was published originally in the* **Moscow News** *weekly (No. 13, 1988, edited by Yegor Yakovlev). She may well be a pioneer of a new Russian genre of anti-Communist re-evaluations of pro-Communist sympathisers. How one wishes that Ilya Ehrenbourg, or the Webbs, or the "Red Dean" of Canterbury could have lived to experience this bitter day of reckoning!*

ROMAIN ROLLAND *(1866-1944), as the author of the classic* roman-fleuve *"Jean-Christophe", was the star in the pro-Soviet intellectual firmament. In 1932, in the May Day appeal published in both "Humanité" and "Pravda", Rolland cried out: "The Fatherland is in danger! Our international Fatherland . . . the USSR." He was the leading figure in, among other rallies, the famous Amsterdam Congress of Intellectuals (with Henri Barbusse, Marcel Cachin, Sherwood Anderson, George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell,* et al.*).*

All these shindigs were actually run by the notorious Willie Muenzenberg, Moscow's Comintern *agent for such cultural fronts (Rolland called him "this great artist in Revolution"). Echoing Rolland, André Gide pronounced Stalin's Russia "an ideal fatherland, we belong to it, and we are ready to fight for it. . . ". But when, in 1936, he became disenchanted and wrote of the realities of Stalin's Russia, it was Rolland who denounced Gide's book.*

JEAN-RICHARD BLOCH, *a lesser figure on the ideological stage in those days, marched in all the parades and signed all the petitions; he edited "Ce Soir", the Communist paper in Paris, together with Louis Aragon. During the Hitler-Stalin pact, at the request of the Kremlin, Bloch was allowed to cross Nazi-Germany in a sealed car, and was met at the Moscow Station by Ilya Ehrenbourg. . . .*

M.J.L.

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with displeasure that all toasts invariably ended with an "obligatory recitative" in honour of Stalin. Anyway, he wrote in his diary that although there were negative and positive experiences, the positive ones prevailed.

After Gorky's death, Rolland's contacts with Soviet writers and public organisations were more sporadic. His letters, requests and questions often went unanswered. In October 1936, Rolland wrote bitterly in his diary that being short of information about current developments in the USSR hindered him in his work, and prevented him from rebutting slanderers and enemies of the USSR. Rolland's situation grew increasingly awkward as progressively-minded writers began turning to him with anxious questions seeking to understand what was happening.

THE MORE Rolland learned about the sweeping arrests and the harshness of the sentences, the less he was able to justify them. In certain cases he tried to intercede for the people he knew personally. He sent testimonies to Moscow in defence of the medical doctors L. Levin and Professor D. Pletnyov who had treated him while he was in the USSR.

Rolland's old friend Hermann Hesse, a German writer residing in Switzerland, asked him to intercede for two people arrested in the USSR. Rolland answered on 5 March 1938, saying that repeated appeals to Stalin on behalf of his own Soviet friends had been to no avail.

Stefan Zweig sent Rolland one anxious and insistent letter after another. "You are wrong, my dear old friend, if you think that I'm against Russia!" Zweig wrote on 27 September 1937.

> "On the contrary, you will read my acknowledgment of the 20th anniversary [of the October Revolution] and find it absolutely positive. But I am *on principle* opposed to executions without trial. I believe that the government has the right, in emergency, to eliminate the enemy—but without smearing him in the moral sense, without labelling him a mercenary. You will recall that there is a dark stain on the memory of the French Revolution, too. I don't mean the guillotine, but the way people were slandered as being 'In Pitt's pay'. That is what I'm utterly opposed to. Why not simply say: he is the enemy of the state? In our bloody age this should be enough. . . . Of course, I understand that poor state security psychologists have the internal propaganda effect in mind, but in fact, they are creating an atmosphere of distrust and disgust."

Zweig said he could not believe that "a quarter of all Soviet generals, captains of industry, writers and political figures were in the pay of the Germans and the Japanese."

WHAT COULD Rolland say in answer to that? Here is what he said in his diary at the end of 1937:

> "I need to state here and now my real frame of mind concerning the USSR. I have been and remain, in my heart of hearts, its loyal defender. I admire and love its indomitable enthusiasm, its powerful and constant evolution. In it I see the surest hope for humanity's social progress. Thus, I am with it—and against all enemies who threaten it."

Further on, Rolland expresses his anguish over the mass repressions.

> "For the last 18 months (since Gorky's death, to be precise) terror has swept the entire Soviet Union. . . . Mortal anxiety has paralysed the Soviet Union's political life. . . . In the last ten months, the prevailing atmosphere has been one of suspicion and fear which freezes the writer's ink, paralyses people's tongues, and humiliates their hearts. . . ."

In the same entry, Rolland formulated his principled position with regard to Stalin's cult.

> "It is not Stalin I am defending, but the USSR, no matter who the country's leader is. Idolatry of persons, be it of Stalin, Hitler, or Mussolini, is extremely harmful. I am committed to the cause of free peoples, the masters of their own destiny."

ROLLAND FELT PERSONALLY responsible for what was happening in the Soviet Union precisely because his attitude was that of a close friend, not an outsider.

It is the sense of responsibility and deep concern for the international moral and political prestige of the Soviet Union that inspired the following lines to the Communist writer Jean-Richard Bloch of 3 March 1938:

> "The Moscow trial is torture to me. I don't feel like writing anything about the nature of the case—we'll talk about it later. However, the resonance of that event all over the world, especially in France and America, will be catastrophic.
>
> "Don't you think the USSR's best friends should now quickly send a letter to the Soviet authorities (a personal letter not intended for the press) begging them to consider the deplorable consequences the death sentence will have for the Popular Front, for the cooperation between the Communist and the Socialist Parties, for our joint defence of Spain? At this very moment when the French Communist Party is doing its best to establish a united front of the working people of different ideological persuasions, all its efforts are threatened because of the possible moral repercussions of the death sentence. Yet it would be quite feasible (in fact wise) to replace the death sentence with exile, which would render the convicts harmless without further exciting public opinion which is already deeply perturbed."

Rolland's letter of 6 November 1937, addressed to the artist Frans Masereel, attests to his deep emotional involvement with and affection for Soviet society, as well as the bitterness he felt in those tragic years:

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"I am by no means happy about the things happening in the USSR—I mean the long-drawn-out epidemic of arrests and executions. I have a personal friend who's very dear to me, who was arrested three months ago in Leningrad. He is a doctor working at a laboratory, a harmless person indifferent to politics. I wrote I don't know how many letters in his defence to Stalin, Yezhov, etc., etc. They didn't bother to answer, even indirectly. Well, since Gorky's death, none of the Soviet 'officials' have replied to any of my letters—invariably for the good of the cause. This is disconcerting indeed. Fortunately, the cause is higher than we or they are! I am loyal to the cause."

Rolland remained loyal to the cause, and that was the most important thing. Stalin's name disappeared forever from his writing. But he continued to correspond with people in Moscow—those he considered his friends rather than "officials". They were the composer D. Kabalevsky who wrote the opera, *Colas Breugnon*; I. Anisimov, editor of Rolland's books published in this country; and, above all, Sergei Kudashev, the son of Rolland's Russian wife, a Moscow University student (he eventually died fighting the Nazis). Rolland was very fond of his stepson and saw him as personifying the best features of the younger Soviet generation.

One of Rolland's last letters, dated 8 November 1944, was addressed to Jean-Richard Bloch, who lived for years in the Soviet Union. The laconic postscript reads:

"My best regards to all my friends in the USSR—and the Soviet youth who are so dear to me!"

AUTHORS

Allen Curnow's collection of poems include *The Loop in Lone Kauri Road* (Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press, 1986).

Katherine Govier was born in Edmonton, Alberta. Her first novel, *Random Descent*, was published in 1979 (Macmillan, Canada), followed in 1982 by *Going Through the Motions* (McClellan & Stewart); a collection of her short stories, *Fables of Brunswick Avenue*, was published by Penguin in 1985. She has also written numerous non-fiction articles in both Canadian and British magazines, and has been a visiting lecturer at York University in Toronto since 1982.

Graeme Wilson recently published the third and concluding volume of the translation from the Japanese of Natsume Soseki's *I am a Cat* (Tuttles, Tokyo and Vermont).

John Gohorry's collections of poems include *A Voyage Round the Moon* (Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets, 1985) and *A Letter from Lewis Chaucer* (Perdix Press, 1985). *Hobbes's Whale*, the full sequence of poems from which the extracts in ENCOUNTER (May and June) have been drawn, will be published later this year by the Paulinus Press (12 Blowhorn Street, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 1BT).

George Schöpflin, Lecturer at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, and at the London School of Economics, is the author, among other works, of *Stability Through Weakness in Poland* (Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1986), and editor of *The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: A Handbook* (Muller, 1985). His most recent article in ENCOUNTER was "The Pattern of Political Takeovers" (February 1985).

Jean-François Revel, the French philosopher and critic, writes a regular column for *Le Point* in Paris. His most recently translated work, *How Democracies Perish*, was published in 1985 by Weidenfeld (London) and Doubleday (New York).

Vernon Bogdanor, Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, is the author of many books, including *Changing British and American Party Systems* (Praeger, 1984) and *What is Proportional Representation?* (Martin Robertson, 1984), and editor of *Representatives of the People?* (Gower Press, 1986), and *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Institutions* (1987). His latest book, *Constitutions in Democratic Politics*, was published in March by Gower. His most recent article in ENCOUNTER was "Disproving Darwin?" (November 1987).

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Julie Landau's work has appeared in many journals and anthologies in the United States and Hong Kong, and she contributed to *Waiting for the Unicorn: Poems and Lyrics of China's Last Dynasty* (Indiana University Press 1986). Her translations of Liu Yung, one of the major *tz'u* poets of Northern Sung China, appeared in ENCOUNTER (November 1985).

Elie Kedourie's memoir in this issue is based on the introduction to the new edition of his 1956 book *England and the Middle East*, just republished by Mansell (London) and the Westview Press (Boulder, Colorado). He is Professor of Politics at the University of London. His numerous books include *Arabic Political Memoirs* (1974), *Islam in the Modern World* (1980), and *The Crossman Confessions and Other Essays in Politics, History and Religion* (Mansell, 1984). His articles in ENCOUNTER include "Disastrous Years" (November 1984), "Political Terror in the Muslim World" (February 1987), and "Ideas & Anarchy in the Middle East" (as co-author, July-August 1987).

Pearl Kezin Bell, who lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is a leading American literary critic. She was formerly the book critic for the *New Leader* and is now fiction critic for *Commentary*.

Edward Pearce is a columnist for *The Sunday Times*, and author of two volumes of sketches of Parliamentary personalities, *The Senate of Lilliput* and *Hummingbirds and Hyenas* (Faber, 1983, 1985). His latest book, *Looking Down on Mrs Thatcher*—published in 1987 by Hamish Hamilton—includes several of his ENCOUNTER articles.

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

"Sendero Luminoso"

Of Violence & Poverty—By WALTER HAUBRICH

IT WAS A HOT January afternoon. Two marine officers sat chatting on a café terrace in the elegant Lima suburb of Miraflores. A chance remark floated on the air: "They're sending me up to Huanta next week to kill Indians. . . ."

A few weeks before Christmas the government party, APRA, had used its parliamentary majority to stifle discussion of the report of the massacre in Lima's prisons. In three prisons, a total of 250 people suspected of belonging to the terrorist organisation *Sendero Luminoso* had been killed —most of them shot with a bullet through the back of the head. *Sendero Luminoso*, the "Shining Path", carries out "executions" of its own daily. With fanatical self-righteousness the armed rebels publish details of their "criminal justice" in their newspaper: suspected informers have their tongues cut out before being killed; men who have allegedly beaten or raped women are castrated; civil servants charged with corruption receive the first shots through what according to their murderers are their "grasping hands".

For years Peru has numbered among those countries where violence and assassination have become everyday occurrences. Government, political parties, trade unions, institutions, and professional associations periodically issue calls for demonstrations and protest marches "against violence". Yet the private remarks of politicians and top army officers, like many of their directives, show precious little sensitivity with regard to atrocities and the victims of atrocities—who almost invariably belong to a different class and usually to a different race as well. It has been calculated that 8,511 corpses already line the "shining path" that the philosopher José Carlos Mariátegui once commended as the way to a more just world. He was an important thinker, but he himself is long since dead and can do nothing about the organisation that took its name from his visionary words.

WALTER HAUBRICH, *whose reports we have often published in* ENCOUNTER *(see "Letter from Valencia", September-October 1987), writes for the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" on Iberian and Latin-American affairs.*

Sendero Luminoso believes that the path leading to the far-off goal of world revolution starts in the Peruvian Andes and that it has to cross "rivers of blood". Half the 8,511 dead were not killed by *Sendero*; they fell beneath the bullets of the police and the army, often under groundless suspicion of being Senderists. The forces of repression frequently adopt the methods of the terrorists.

The marine officer's remark which I heard in the café was not indicative of any particular personal cruelty or exceptional cynicism. To be sent up to Huanta, one of the towns most often attacked by *Sendero Luminoso*, means a trip to an alien, hostile world, high in the Andes, a world inhabited by quite different people—Indians—who kill and get killed.

The ordinary inhabitants of Lima and the other coastal towns do not know the victims of terrorism and repression; they never include friends of theirs. Of the 250 actual or putative Senderists killed in Lima's prisons, only the agronomist Díaz Martínez—probably *Sendero*'s second-in-command until his summary execution—had acquaintances among politicians, journalists, academics, and the white upper class. That is the difference between terror and repression in Peru and the violence that obtained in Argentina and Uruguay under the military dictatorships (and even before). In Buenos Aires, for example, every middle-class family had a relative or friend who had been dragged off by paramilitary commandos and either tortured or killed—the victims of these terrorist attacks were nearly always representatives of urban society.

LITTLE IS KNOWN about the victims of terror and repression in Peru. They remain virtually anonymous. Unable to write, they even have difficulty in putting their appalling experiences into words. Many of them speak Spanish—the national language—only very imperfectly.

The intellectuals, doctors, and lawyers who survived army and police persecution in Argentina were able to describe their sufferings in what were often very eloquent and moving testimonies. For the respected lawyer or successful writer who was summarily taken from his office or home, imprisoned, usually without being told why, and there subjected to ill-treatment, the horror and above all the extraordinary nature of the experience, made it the event that more than any other, changed his life.

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The reports of the victims of *Sendero Luminoso* terror and of the innocent people persecuted by the Peruvian police and armed forces suggest that they do not find what happened to them at all extraordinary. In Ayacucho today they distinguish between "war", by which they mean the period since the beginning of the terrorism, and "peace", that is to say the time before. But the changes that "war" has brought into their lives are relatively minor. They recount tales of such terrible events from their normal lives that it seems as if war is a kind of continuation of peace—except that everything is worse. After the way life has dealt with them, the people of the Andes appear to have lost the ability to feel shock. Grief, for them, is like a congenital condition.

The "war" is not the number-one crisis in their lives. Conditions in the prisons are only slightly worse than their everyday living conditions in freedom. Terrorism differs only in degree from the norm of misery and indigence. There have been so many incomprehensible and dreadful events in their lives, caused by external factors beyond their understanding: and now the meaning of the terrorist killings in their villages and the tortures inflicted on them in the police stations is also beyond them.

THE GOVERNMENT is using the army to fight the terrorists, and most of the soldiers in the so-called anti-subversive units in the Andes are themselves Indians or *cholos*—half-castes with a large admixture of Indian blood. Most of the higher ranks in the military hierarchy are, of course, occupied by whites; the Indians and *cholos* also do the dirty work of repression, while the whites give the torturers their orders. Deployment of the armed forces initially led to an increase in public sympathy for the terrorists. Particularly in rural areas, a deep hatred of the military has grown up, for few *campesinos* have not at some stage had a nasty experience with men in uniform. News of atrocities perpetrated by soldiers is assiduously passed from village to village; when murders are carried out by terrorists, it is not always simply from fear that the *campesinos* remain silent. The worst excesses of repression have occurred in villages where marines were deployed. The marines, who feel they constitute a kind of upper class in the armed forces, continue to inspire greater fear than the army.

Peru is a democratically governed country with a free press. When the police or the armed forces use excessive violence, the newspapers report it. The young President, Alan García, even managed to do something about human-rights observance in the Andes area during his first year in office. But when it came to the prison revolt he gave the military a free hand—with appalling results. The murders of prisoners were accepted by the public without much demur; most people in Lima may actually have endorsed them.

Peruvians not directly affected by it are becoming increasingly hardened to violence in its various forms. In Lima, the *Sendero Luminoso* terrorists are more hated than the armed forces or the police. That is one of the many antitheses of thinking and feeling between the people of the coastal strip and those of the sierra, the Andes mountains. As far as Lima's upper and middle classes are concerned, terrorism is a consequence of the existence of Indians and half-castes, who came down from the mountains not so very long ago and settled in the huge slums all around the city (euphemistically known as "new villages"). The inhabitants of the rich districts of Lima are reacting to terrorist assassinations with increasing anger and aggression, despite the fact that they themselves are hardly affected. In this way they are unwittingly furthering one of the strategic goals of *Sendero Luminoso*, which is to deepen the rift and acerbate the antagonisms between the two population groups. The aggressive reaction soon takes on a racial component: it is "dirty Indians and damned *cholos*" who scare the whites—although many of those "whites" are in fact brown-skinned *cholos*, half-castes who have become integrated into the urban middle class. Like the other countries colonised by Spain and Portugal, Peru rejects any classification of the population by skin colour, yet the social classes usually divide along colour lines.

THE TERRORISM OF THE *Sendero Luminoso* organisation began in Ayacucho, and it is there that most outrages still occur today. In many circles, "Ayacuchan" is already regarded as a synonym for terrorist. A Peruvian Indian or half-caste who is wretchedly dressed, speaks only broken Spanish, and to cap it all hails from Ayacucho, will find it extremely difficult to get work in Lima, for example, or in Arequipa. He might be a Senderist, you see, a follower of the "Shining Path". The many Indians and *cholos* who line the walls in central Lima every night with cold, expressionless faces, or tramp the streets around the Plaza San Martin, "could all be Ayacuchans, Senderists, terrorists", say the whites who point to them out of their car windows.

"We know so little about them, we can't help feeling afraid of them. They live such totally different lives."

Still, Peru has yet to see the formation of paramilitary commandos "to kill Communists, Indians, and *cholos*". Generals who demand that terror be fought with the methods of terror—and practise what they preach, as the prison massacres showed—continue to encounter opposition among a broad front. Many Peruvians fear that if the generals and admirals started killing people they would not stop at terrorists or even at Indians. Generals such as Rabanal (who was among those responsible for the prison massacres) and Cisneros (an expert on anti-subversive warfare and friend of the former Argentinian junta), even put the wind up the middle classes. Cisneros wants to see "the juridical framework of the country adjusted to suit the requirements of the present war situation. . . ." He believes that to catch 20 terrorists you have to reckon with the deaths of probably 80 innocent people. The theory of national security on which the Right-wing military dictatorships of Latin America base their case has not been forgotten even in Peru, which currently has a Left-wing government.

The Indians tell of the murder or disappearance of members of their families in toneless voices and clumsy Spanish. As is customary in the Indian languages, they repeat what seem to them significant details over and over again, and link their very real reports of the latest atrocities with scraps of

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Inca mythology. The relatives of people arrested by the police or the armed forces and never seen again, take their complaints to the Commission for Human Rights.

The staff of the "Study Centre for Psychoanalysis & Society", headed by César Rodríguez Rabanal, are investigating the inhabitants of one of Lima's "new villages", the slum quarter of Huanta Chico or Little Huanta. These are nearly all people who have fled from Huanta, the province of Ayacucho that is hardest hit by terrorism and repression. Some fled from *Sendero Luminoso*, others from the police and the marines. Political differences run right through families. A woman in Little Huanta shows visitors photographs of her home town, Huanta. They show the burial of her son, killed by the troops of a special army unit as a suspected terrorist. Standing beside the coffin is a young man dressed in the uniform of that same anti-subversive special unit.

"My oldest son", the woman says in a tone of voice that, while it betrays no pride, betrays no shame either. Many of the inhabitants of Little Huanta describe themselves as non-political and say they came to Lima for economic reasons. No one wishes to be seen either as a friend of *Sendero* or as enjoying the confidence of the police. That could be as dangerous in Lima as it was back home, high in the Andes.

Now that *Sendero Luminoso* has become so "successful"—in its own awful terms—and is in a position to threaten seriously the political and social system of Peru and possibly of other countries as well, the secret services of a number of countries have begun to take an interest in the Ayacucho-based organisation, its history, and any international contacts it may have. It was mainly American services that looked—using the methods customary in such cases—for foreign connections and external financing. They found nothing, because there is nothing to find.

Sendero Luminoso came into being in the Peruvian Andes, and it is from there that it is run; it accepts no outside directives. However, the Peruvian terrorist organisation does get propaganda backing abroad from the Internationalist Revolutionary Movement (*MRI*), an alliance of many small groups calling themselves Maoist. The Peruvian Communist Party (*PCP*)—to use *Sendero*'s official name—considers itself a member of this association of otherwise insignificant little parties such as the "Revolutionary Communist Party" of the United States with its curious leader, the bearded and busily intriguing Bob Aviakan.

A great deal is known about the emergence, preferred field of action, and social and economic background of *Sendero Luminoso*. Peruvian universities and research institutes have done much useful work here, usually with financial backing from European colleges and foundations. The investigation, for example, that Rodríguez Rabanal and his staff have begun into strategies of survival in the context of political violence, is partly financed by a German foundation in Hamburg. A number of the foundations run by the West German political parties in Bonn have had useful studies made of the situation in the Andes region. In this region, among people who live in quite exceptional poverty and to whom no one, as yet, has offered a way out, *Sendero*'s ideas—rejected elsewhere as absurd or over-radical—find a ready hearing, especially where the traditional power-structures and the authority of the elected *varayoks* (local-council) leaders has been broken by white influence and through Indians returning from the coast.

The *Sendero* ideologues even draw upon ancient Indian myths and legends to reinforce the mountain-dweller's hatred of the "outsiders", i.e. the whites from the big cities on the coast. Recently, *Sendero* influence has meant that once again people of "foreign appearance" have been killed in the sierra because they were taken for the "*Pistaco*". According to an Andean legend the *Pistaco* is the devil who sucks the fat from the bodies of sierra Indians to feed the people of the coast, making them grow stronger and taller. *Sendero* has now put about the story of a tall, blond, pale-eyed *Pistaco*, which is why well-meaning Peruvians in Lima currently advise their fair-haired foreign friends against visiting any villages in the regions of Ayacucho, Apurimac, or Cusco.

In Lima, *Sendero Luminoso* is particularly popular among students at the so-called preparatory colleges where school-leavers are prepared for courses of higher education—often at universities whose diplomas have no standing and are of little use when it comes to looking for a job. Not many years have passed since the parents of those students came down from the Andes to settle in the slums of the capital. Be they students or workers, they have failed to find a place within the traditional class structure. Moreover, they know that they will never find one. Every day the search for a means of subsistence must begin afresh. The perpetual struggle for survival forces them into frequent changes of domicile—if, that is, they have a domicile to start with. If they return to their homes in the Andes, people there regard them as failures, while they themselves carry round with them the heavy burden of frustration imposed by their experiences in the city.

This makes them particularly susceptible to what *Sendero Luminoso* offers: a chance to change radically what for them is so unjust a world, by means of brutal violence. For people who belong nowhere and who are neither city-dwellers nor villagers, neither industrial workers nor farm labourers, the "Shining Path" holds out new standards and a set of values that bring fresh meaning to their seemingly worthless lives. They also accept the iron discipline by which quite minor offences carry the death penalty. After all, their lives have always been ruled by others. They are the people most ready to fight for a "world revolution" that lies a hundred years or more in the future. Murderous actions for an objective that will bring happiness to many are, in their eyes, an ethically justified form of revenge for the injustice that has been, and is still, meted out to them.

Under a wide variety of régimes—Right- and Left-wing democracies, a Left-wing military government, and a moderate Right-wing one—Peru has grown steadily poorer in recent decades. There have been various reasons for this: unsuccessful economic policies by all governments; a series of natural disasters; high defence spending

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during the military dictatorship; a self-seeking upper class who send capital out of the country. A lack of infrastructure as well as the Indians' problems of adjustment have inhibited the formation of a national community to which all Peruvians can feel they belong. The crucial antagonisms within present-day Peruvian society are no longer those between individual social classes. The deepest division runs between the minority section of the population—people who are integrated in Peruvian society as entrepreneurs, civil servants, or workers with employment contracts—and the majority of Peruvians, who stand apart from that society, have no access to its supply mechanisms, and are also virtually outside its control. *Sendero Luminoso* sees itself as representing the Peruvians who are not integrated into the system. Looked at in that way, it is entirely consistent that the terrorist organisation should kill not only members of the upper class but also labour leaders and village elders.

THE IDEOLOGY OF the "Shining Path" is a mish-mash of Marx, Mao, and Mariátegui, concocted by the former Ayacucho University philosophy lecturer Abimael Guzmán —known within the organisation as "Comrade Gonzalo". "Gonzalo ideas" or "Gonzalist thinking" are what the Senderists call their ideological base. Most of those ideas are of glaring simplicity, often consisting of no more than sentences from Lenin, Mao, or Mariátegui, slightly adjusted to relate them to the situation currently obtaining in Peru.

These bald statements, when delivered by young Senderists in village squares, make few demands on the understanding even of politically ignorant and ideologically uninitiated listeners. Outsiders may find the childish triumphalism naive if not comical, but the cult of violence enshrined in Senderist writings is terrifying.

"We have shaken the reactionary state to its very foundations", one reads. "None can stop us on our way to ultimate victory." The motto for 1986 was: "*Let us step up guerrilla warfare in the service of world revolution!*"

In a discussion document, issued last autumn in preparation for a conference to be held this year at a secret location, the phrase "*revolutionary violence*" occurs seven times in the space of 14 lines. For *Sendero*, revolutionary violence includes the occupation of villages along with the "execution" of a section of the inhabitants or the murder of the government officials sent up from the coast. Revolutionary violence has become a universal remedy, applicable indiscriminately.

One can ridicule such abstruse watchwords; but that does not alter the fact that *Sendero Luminoso* is now potentially one of the world's most successful revolutionary movements. There are many imponderables here. It may be that the price is now having to be paid for the fact that so little concern has ever been shown for the long-suffering and seemingly so patient Indians. A sleeping people—as it appeared—may, when roused, wreak fearful havoc not only in Peru but also in Bolivia and Ecuador.

Little is known of the true role played by Abimael Guzmán—"Comrade Gonzalo"—in the rapid rise of *Sendero*, or of his importance and influence today (if he is still alive). *Sendero* gives no information about personnel and personnel-changes within the organisation. On the other hand, Guzmán's enormous importance at the time of the founding of the organisation, the recruiting of its first members, and in the preparation of the "phases of the armed struggle" is beyond dispute. He possessed the persuasiveness and charisma of a born political leader. Although not from the Andes himself but from the city of Arequipa, he talked many of the young students who had come to Ayacucho University from the Indian towns and villages, into taking up arms to reclaim the Indians' former rights, and at the same time into killing, and getting themselves killed, for the sake of the distant goal of world revolution.

THERE IS NO DOUBT that the *Sendero Luminoso* terrorist organisation will never be overcome by the police and armed forces alone. Nor have Peruvian governments confined their answer to repression: the state is now investing in the once largely forgotten Andean regions, while the army delivers food and medical supplies to the Indian communities. Increasing numbers of *Sendero* combatants are trying to break away from the organisation. But even if the day should come when there are no more armed followers of "Comrade Gonzalo" to terrorise the mountain villages and the slums of Lima, unless the majority of the population can be given some hope of improving their wretched circumstances, other groups will come forward to preach violence as a prerequisite for "a better world".

Following the Left-wing military dictator Velasco and the Liberal-democrat Belaúnde, the Social-democratic President Alan García is the third harbinger of hope in recent times to have made the Peruvians many, as yet unfulfilled, promises. A Peru without the daily prospect of violence can probably only emerge after radical structural changes—changes, however, that as in other Latin American countries will have to be brought about by non-violent means.

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CINEMA

Woody Allen, Cultural Phenomenon

The "Schlemiel" as Intellectual—By PEARL K. BELL

SCENE: *(The face of Anton Chekhov appears on the screen.)*
DEEP VOICE INTONES: **"Woody Allen is the Chekhov of our time. In his languid comedies the pathos of modern life is revealed through the poignancy of** *temps perdu.*"
WOODY ALLEN'S VOICE-OVER: **"Hmmm? No, not yet. Maybe after my next film,** *The Cherry Street Orchard?*"

SCENE: *(Chekhov dissolves and the face of Sholem Aleichem appears.)*
DEEP VOICE INTONES: **"Woody Allen is the Sholem Aleichem of our culture. In his wry stories the ironic humour of Jewish life is revealed in the breaking hearts and sharp tongues of his characters, oppressed by the coarseness of the gentile world."**
WOODY ALLEN'S VOICE-OVER: **"Maybe? Naah. Who cares about the nudnicks in Kasrilovke? Anyway, there are too many phudnicks—nudnicks with a Ph.D.—in my audience already."**

SCENE: *(Sholem Aleichem dissolves, and the face of Saul Bellow appears.)*
DEEP VOICE INTONES: **"Woody Allen is the Saul Bellow of our cinema. In the urban milieu that he describes with such precision, the discontent of the intelligentsia is rendered with unsparing clarity."**
WOODY ALLEN'S VOICE-OVER: **"Does this define my genius? Let's see: I am a nebbish, Brooklyn-born, Brooklyn, that yenta of a city."**

ARE THESE the ghostly images that Woody Allen might see as he peers into the mirror of his art? Are these the ancestral names he hears the audience murmur with awe as he lurks in the movie-house lobby? It's enough to turn a man's head—in the wrong direction.

Woody Allen *is* an extraordinary cultural phenomenon. Since 1968 he has written and directed 16 movies, and has played the leading role in most of them. (The 17th, *September*, will open in London later this year.) His sketches and stories appear in *The New Yorker*. As befits a serious writer, the script of *Hannah and Her Sisters* has been published as a work of literature. And he has been given the ultimate homage: a 464-page book, *Woody Allen on Location*, "a day-to-day account of the making of *Radio Days*" by a film buff, Thierry de Navacelle, who dedicates it to François Truffaut, no less.[1]

[1] Woody Allen, *Hannah and Her Sisters* (Vintage Books, New York). *Woody Allen on Location*. By THIERRY DE NAVACELLE. William Morrow, $18.95.

What is it about Woody Allen's style and our culture that has made him such a phenomenon? What is so strikingly different about his approach to the art of film? There may be three innovations that account for his success; and they are impressive.

One is the cunning skill with which he has adapted a modernist literary device for the cinema. Most movies still tell a story in the straightforward manner of the 19th-century novel. A linear narrative unfolds; and we sit in the dark, watching fictitious characters enact an invented story. But Woody Allen turns the conventional way of telling a story on its head. He invites us into his own life, and intrudes on the action with his own voice, commenting like a Greek chorus, or a *kibbitzer*, on the images he has devised. He doesn't stay behind the scenes, like most directors, but talks right into the camera, sharing with the audience his thoughts and his uncertainties about the right way to get the film moving. In *Manhattan*, he starts out with some voice-over ruminations as he struggles to find the perfect phrases for the city and his feelings about it. He tries one approach ("He was too romantic about Manhattan, as about everything else"), rejects it, and takes a different tack in the hope of finding something "more profound" ("He adored New York City, although to him, it was a metaphor for the decay of contemporary culture"), turns that down as "too preachy" and gropes for another way of telling us what he wants to do before he plunges into the story itself.

The second: as we sit through such films as *Annie Hall, Manhattan,* and *Stardust Memories*, we don't feel we're look-

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ing at actors impersonating made-up characters. We seem to be looking at real people: the crowds waiting to get inside the cinema; the celebrities and groupies at Elaine's; above all, a man named Woody Allen, a neurotic Jewish intellectual who looks like a wimp but is really a very smart cookie. The leading lady is usually the current woman in Allen's life (Louise Lasser, Diane Keaton, Mia Farrow). Many of the interior scenes in *Hannah and Her Sisters* were shot in Mia Farrow's apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Allen doesn't bother to explain why the children of the imaginary Hannah look oriental: it's taken for granted that everyone knows all about Mia Farrow's adopted Vietnamese kids, who "play" themselves. The inside dope about the Stars of the Silver Screen, which in the old days was confined to popular magazines like *Photoplay*, has now been transferred to the screen itself, and the juicy real-life gossip is part of the film. The movie-goers can feel they've been admitted to the inner sanctum of Woody Allen's glamourised reality through his *cinéma vérité*.

The third: Woody Allen has created a new kind of Jewish comedian who is not only smart and sassy but erudite as well. His wisecracks are festooned with names and titles covering a vast range of intellectual reference, from Socrates to Kafka, like the college reading-list for Humanities 101. For the millions in the audience who consider themselves part of the *culturati*, Allen's gags, crackling with literary know-how, dispense the balm of self-esteem. And the jokes are no mere laughing matter, but profound reflections on the foibles and hang-ups of our time. This comic must be a *khukhem*, the wise man of old.

It wasn't always this way. In his early efforts as a movie-maker, in such comedies as *Take the Money and Run, Everything You Wanted to Know About Sex But Were Afraid to Ask, Bananas*, and *Sleeper*, Woody Allen was not an intellectual but an inventive screwball, exploiting his weaknesses in a knockabout mixture of Chaplin's tatterdemalion farce and the Marx Brothers' surrealism. What the zaniness of *Bananas* most reminded us of, however, was the stand-up comic of the borscht-circuit who'd try anything for a laugh, usually at his own and his listeners' expense. (Allen began writing gags for comedians like Sid Caesar when he was still in his teens.) The one-liner virtuosity of the bespectacled *schlemiel* was his best revenge against a fate that made his height too short and his nose too long. And those wild-eyed movies were hilarious, spinning with explosive, crazy energy through a send up of Fidel Castro or the science-fiction future.

But Woody Allen had loftier ambitions as a movie-maker. He revered the films of the great foreign directors—Bergman, Fellini, Buñuel, Kurosawa—and felt he would never come close to joining that august company if he stuck to wacky comedies. As he once told a *Newsweek* interviewer: "When you do comedy you're not sitting at the grown-ups' table, you're sitting at the children's table." He was determined to put all that kids' stuff behind him and brood on-screen, like Ingmar Bergman, about important matters: life and death, the hollowness of fame, the agony of art. Impatient with the ephemeral antics of farce, Allen longed to be taken seriously, to be respected and honoured as an *auteur*.

As his "straight" movie, *Interiors*, made clear, Allen can imitate the cinematic technique of Bergman and the other "Old Masters" but he lacks their creative power. What he had to settle for, given his undeniable gifts as an intellectual mimic, was parody and pastiche. Even in his early comedies he couldn't resist the mocking allusion to great moments in the history of film, like the Eisenstein baby carriage bouncing down the steps (in *Bananas*). He modelled the freeze-dried *angst* of *Interiors* so slavishly on the work of Ingmar Bergman that you wondered why the actors weren't speaking Swedish. In *Stardust Memories*, he borrowed not only the autobiographical idea of Fellini's *8½* but made generous use of the Italian director's camera-angles and hallucinatory nightmares. He is indeed an expert of all the post-modernist diversions.

Nor is it just movies that Allen gleefully plunders. When he cast Geraldine Page and Maureen Stapleton in *Interiors*, he was lifting some ready-made images from Tennessee Williams. In *The Purple Rose of Cairo* he played around with Pirandello's permutations of appearance and reality. In what is by now a Woody Allen trademark, he takes his cue from Chekhov: there are three sisters in *Hannah*, in *Interiors*, and in *Radio Days*. But he leaves it at that, since none of the sisterly trios live in the provinces (unless this consummate Manhattanite thinks the Far Rockaway of *Radio Days* is the outer darkness); nor do any of his sisters project the aching despondency of insurmountable frustration that is the heart of Chekhov's play. Towards the end of *Radio Days*, in a curious piece of borrowing, Allen puts some wistful lines from the closing scene of *Three Sisters* into the mouth of a cartoon-like radio actor, who is watching the New Year arrive in Times Square. Since this bubblehead is hardly the type who might wonder, in Chekhov's sad words, whether he will be "remembered by later generations", the joke (if it is a joke) deflates itself: not funny, not moving, neither a parody of Chekhov nor a left-handed act of homage. Of course, we're not told where the lines come from. The director is winking, as usual, at his fellow *littérateurs*.

Allen often has trouble sustaining the dramatic momentum of his films from beginning to end, and coherently working out the idea he started out with. Either the movie falls apart halfway through, like *Love and Death*, or it drags on endlessly to no purpose, like *Hannah and Her Sisters*. The exception is *Annie Hall*, in which his control of the story, the mood, and the characters rarely wavered; and there was a clear grasp of intention all the way through. In this bitter-sweet love story, he captured the fantasies and vulnerability of the urban Jewish intellectual, entangled with the insecure girl from the gentile heartland. He's drawn to her larky sense of fun; she's a bright relief from his Jewish ex-wives, those dull and terribly earnest *kvetches*. She is flattered by his attempt to educate her, and amused by his city-boy panic in the face of anything that smacks of nature. Though the sex is great, too, the

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affair inevitably crumbles as irritation and bone-deep incompatibility take their toll. Under the surface of New York wisecracks and banter, Allen caught the poignant reality of loss and regret. Though there are moments in *Annie Hall* that should have been left on the cutting-room floor, it is the most genuinely affecting of his movies.

YET THAT'S ONLY one film. Most of the time, Woody Allen juggles so many guises and disguises, rummages so frantically in the lumber-room of literary and movie history, tries on so many borrowed personas in film after film, it's hard to figure out who our *hypocrite auteur* truly is, what sort of artist he wants to be. What is unmistakable is Allen's anxiety about his elusive identity, and this in turn provided the scheme for *Zelig*, along with a chance to show he knows that identity has been the central theme in psychology and philosophy from Erik Erikson to Derek Parfitt.

Zelig is the soul of anonymity, adapting himself within and without to any situation, dissolving into whatever company he happens to keep. The idea was full of comic pathos, but Allen couldn't leave well enough alone. He had to turn Zelig into a cultural parody as well as a human chameleon. In an elaborate send up of the witnesses in *Reds*, Allen induced some intellectual stars (Irving Howe, Bruno Bettelheim, Susan Sontag, Saul Bellow, among others—after all, who doesn't want to be in the movies?) to have some fun about themselves as they ponder the phenomenon of Zelig. Since the film begins with this parody-within-parody, the metamorphoses of Zelig that follow seem an anti-climax. Running out of imaginative steam midway, Allen threw in some tasteless footage of Zelig at a Nazi rally in Nuremberg, and wound up with a desperate burst of silliness as our hero flies back and forth across the ocean behind an aeroplane. The sad and comic potential of the identity-crisis idea collapsed under the weight of the intellectual charade.

THOUGH WOODY ALLEN thinks of himself as a highbrow, he is decidely uncertain about the way to play this role. Despite all the cultural baggage he unloads in his movies, he can't stop taking pot-shots at the brainy types who think he's nothing but a clown. He wants to be acclaimed as a serious artist, but doesn't have much use for those who do. In *Stardust Memories*, Allen appropriates the savagely distorting lens of Fellini and Diane Arbus to spell out his contempt for his adoring public, foreshortening the camera distance to make the faces concave, turning his fans into grotesques who can't understand his genius. Playing a renowned director who is pestered by stupid admirers at a weekend film seminar, Allen protests: "I don't want to make funny movies any more. . . . I just look around the world and all I see is human suffering." How are we supposed to take this sudden access of altruism when he can't suppress his revulsion at the ugliness of his commonplace audience?

In an *Esquire* interview last year, Allen disingenuously denied that *Stardust Memories* showed contempt for his fans, then insisted that it was

> ". . . the best film I ever did, really. . . . It was my least popular film. That may automatically mean it was my best film. . . . I see a definitive correlation between lack of popularity and high quality."

So much for the *schnooks* waiting in the rain for hours at six bucks a head!

He wants to have it both ways: to make art films that mock art films, to be intellectual and anti-intellectual at the same time, to show that Woody Allen knows the score and can't be aced by anyone. When Alvy Singer is driven nuts in *Annie Hall* by the trendy jargon of the Columbia professor (of "TV Media & Culture") standing behind him in the cinema queue, Allen brings Marshall McLuhan on camera (as if we're all waiting together) to puncture the fatuous "McLuhanesque" posturing. But if we've listened, the prof's terms *were* McLuhanesque, so who's kidding whom? He who laughs last may not know why he's laughing.

In *Manhattan*, the Radcliffe honours student, played by Diane Keaton, is another fount of snooty pretensions, with her prattle about "negative capability" and Kierkegaard. Though Allen is ridiculing her culture-dropping, he's also able to show off . . . to prove that he, too, belongs in the highbrow club. When Keaton is in the dumps, he tells her, "Your self-esteem is like a notch below Kafka's", and he describes her to a friend as "the winner of the Zelda Fitzgerald Maturity Award". He pelts us with such a hailstorm of classy tags, we're reminded of the Gypsy Rose Lee song in *Pal Joey:*

> *Zip! I was reading Schopenhauer last night.*
> *Zip! And I think that Schopenhauer was right. . . .*
> *Zip! I'm an intellectual.*

Lorenz Hart's spoof of the high-falutin stripper had elegant wit and brio. But the trappings of pseudo-culture are no joke to Woody Allen's fans, who can't get enough of his knowing chatter. It's money in the bank of self-congratulation for those who've heard of "negative capability" but are a little shaky about what it means. In this milieu the shallow waters run deep.

WOODY ALLEN does have an identity problem, and it isn't funny. It is rooted most disturbingly, not in his dilettantism or in the irreconcilable demands of the jester and the *auteur*, but in his sense of himself as a Jew. Seen from one angle, Woody Allen the comedian seems to be a younger, more sophisticated, better-educated descendant of the older American Jewish entertainers—George Jessel, Eddie Cantor, Jackie Pearl, George Burns, to name only a few—who became prominent in the first half of the century. Particularly in the early decades, many of those comedians, born to Yiddish-speaking immigrant families, mangled the *mamalushen* into Yinglish, mocked the accents of the "mockies", and had no inhibitions about being boisterously, manically crude. But no matter how broad the routine, they were aggressively asserting themselves *as* Jews, flaunting their Jewishness as a way of jeering at the genteel sensibility of the gentiles. For that dynasty of comedians, as Irving Howe has observed, "Jewishness was cause neither for self-denying

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shame nor ethical nail-biting". What sets Woody Allen apart, far apart, from the older generation is the vagrant self-contempt that seeps into his movies.

Much of his wit springs from the prickly Jewish talent for ironic self-deprecation, and his aspirations as an intellectual have been shaped by the style and manner of Jewish novelists like Saul Bellow and Philip Roth, Jewish humorists like S. J. Perelman, and the Jewish critical intelligence associated in the past with *Partisan Review*. But what he can't come to terms with, can't accept and certainly doesn't like, is the Jewish world that made him. For Allen the lower-middle-class Brooklyn family is not remembered with any of the affection some New York intellectuals summon up, but with the embarrassed distaste it evokes in many others. In his films he depicts the Jewish family as irredeemably loud, vulgar, and ugly; and though he's come a long way from Flatbush, he can't quell the clawing anxiety—for all his worldly success, and the interminable years of psychoanalysis—that he has been irrevocably tainted by that petty-bourgeois world. The Jewish self-loathing imprinted by his Brooklyn beginnings remains as unalterable as a fingerprint.

His compulsion to ridicule the vulgarity of the lower-middle-class Jewish family would seem to place Woody Allen in the same camp with the young Philip Roth, who was a merciless satirist in the stories of *Goodbye, Columbus*, and in *Portnoy's Complaint*. But Roth, in *The Ghost Writer* (1979)—and his new novel, *The Counterlife* (1987)—has grown more thoughtful about his Jewishness, and has shown himself capable of shedding the spite that fuelled his earlier fiction; for he has the mind, the voice, and the ear that can endow experience and feeling with unquestionable authenticity. Woody Allen can't get beyond the malice of farcical crudity. Since he can't resolve the contradiction between wanting to be a Jewish intellectual and scorning his Jewish origins, and won't ask himself what it means to be a Jew, he remains stuck on the treadmill of burlesque.

When he was more of a writer than a movie-maker, he could portray the *schlemiel* and the Jewish mother with a modicum of affection. But in his films the innocent fun turns to vinegar. Ike Davis, in *Manhattan*, thinks it's a giggle to call a short story about his mother "The Castrating Zionist". In one sequence of *Annie Hall*, Allen splits the screen to show Diane Keaton's handsome Wasp family (a little eccentric, true, but at least they're quiet) side by side with Alvy Singer's gross, fat, hysterically quarrelsome relatives back in Brooklyn. The part-endearing, part-exasperating incompetence of the *schlemiel* in Allen's stories gets an ugly twist in his movies: he is a *schlemiel* because he is a Jew. Inevitably, the *shiksa* becomes the prize at the end of the rainbow.

By the time Allen made *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986), ten years after *Annie Hall*, it looked as though he had finally got the bile of self-hate out of his system. (*Stardust Memories* alone should have purged him for all time, it was so relentless.) In *Hannah*, the ethnic identity of all the characters except Mickey (played by Allen) is undefined, and Mickey's bumbling quest for the Meaning of Life, as he toys first with Catholicism and then with *Hare Krishna*, is a very tired vaudeville turn, like his hypochondria. It is hard to grasp just what Allen was trying to work out in this movie, a series of truncated sketches slouching toward a sentimental ending. There's little bite to the dialogue, little substance to the characters; and since it takes a certain talent to produce affectless vapidity, *Hannah* was hailed as Woody Allen's masterpiece.

But anyone who imagined that he was over and done with Jewish self-contempt was in for a rude awakening at *Radio Days*, a witless misalliance of nostalgia and revulsion that was released last year. The brief Jewish-family flashback in *Annie Hall* has metastasised, and more than half the later film points Woody Allen's avenging camera at the crass vulgarians of an extended lower-middle-class Jewish clan. When Grandpa laces a grotesquely bulging Grandma into her corset, Allen's abhorrence is so palpable it fills us with shame—for him. He still can't cope with his feelings about the Jews, and in *Radio Days* they are more repugnant than ever.

Why has Woody Allen's rebarbative travesty of Jewish life, his contempt for himself as a Jew, been so little remarked, and raised so few hackles among the critics and the public? Even the magazine *Hadassah*, of all places, in an article on Jewish humour, kindly informs us that "Woody Allen, having donned the *schlemiel* persona, gives us permission to laugh and recognise our weaknesses and gain acceptance, as did Sholem Aleichem." Aside from Pauline Kael and John Simmon, no film critic, as far as I know, has noticed, much less been bothered by, the way he portrays the Jews. Why was Philip Roth pilloried for his caricatures while Woody Allen's larger-than-life images give no offence? Are words in fact more wounding than images on a screen, which are readily defanged with "Look, fellas, it's only a movie"?

The critics now deconstruct Allen's films as fast as he can make them, and these days he churns them out at the dizzying pace of one a year. He has become the darling of the semi-skilled intelligentsia that is flattered by jokes with a literary flavour, like the post-coital wisecrack in *Annie Hall*: "As Balzac said, 'There goes another novel'. . . ." His movies suit the cultural mood of the moment to perfection: with their quick and easy allusions, they are all surface, self-aggrandisement and self-indulgence. He thumbs his nose at high culture while proving, with his collection of intellectual bric-a-brac, that he can play the game. What Woody Allen, the cultural phenomenon, most trenchantly demonstrates is a simple truth: If you can make people laugh, they won't question anything you do. But why are they laughing? and at whom?

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THEATRE

Terse Terence & His Betters

By Edward Pearce

OTHER PEOPLE take against Brecht for the ferocity of his Party-line propaganda, the notorious passage in *Die Massnahme* for example. But on the strength of *The Tutor* (Old Vic) there seem to be good grounds for wondering more generally about the intrinsic merits of this bullying pedant. *The Tutor*, adapted by Brecht from J. M. R. Lenz, is a thin, smirking satire—on the aspirations of educated Germans, on the Prussian upper classes and on Romanticism. It is strung across a score of little scenes which give the impression of a glorified charade. The joke is ponderous, almost as great a burden to the snappish author as to the audience. Most of the laughter at this performance was directed at bits of business, smuttily contrived by Angelika Hurwicz for undemanding groundlings. It is a desperate production that needs the coat gestures of a flasher to elicit any response.

A tutor, underpaid by his *Junker* employer, has an affair with the daughter of the house and gets her pregnant. He flees to take refuge with a schoolmaster whose god-daughter also attracts him. In remorse, he castrates himself, to the admiration of the schoolmaster who sees this as an example of virtue and a perfect qualification for teaching. The fiancé of the pregnant girl is meanwhile detained, first in Hallé at the University, and then on a trip to Italy (which furnishes him with the Goethe hat and cloak that mark the one charming moment of the evening). Finally, he arrives home in a welter of Kantian uplift, to be reconciled to his girl, while the tutor, secure in his emasculation, looks forward to steady employment.

The taste, as always with Brecht, is unpleasant; the humour as slow and turbid as a silted stream. As a revival, it looks like jumble; theatrical archaeology. Brecht has added his own spiteful schoolmaster's sarcasm, and the effect is one of lunging, heavy-booted, one-dimensional exposition.

It is not helped by some careless and untalented acting. The gruesome Windsor Davies plays the squire, with all the resources of a situation-comedy hack. Two of the women had yet, on the first night, to wholly grasp their lines. They didn't precisely dry but spent much of the evening striking desperately for shore.

Kevin McNally, as the tutor of the title, and Vernon Dobtcheff as Wenzeslaus, the schoolmaster, are solidly proficient, which here makes them shine. It is sad to see the Mirvish management, which has done splendid things since taking over the Old Vic, and from which much more is expected this season, letting this weary, limping apology of a piece get through its quality control. Kant, Junkerdom, and the Romantic movement are all equally open to satire, but they have nothing to fear from this plate of cold sauerkraut.

THE CONTRASTS with *A Touch of the Poet* at the Comedy Theatre are marked. Not that O'Neill's last play is an example of subtlety or nuance. O'Neill thought of nuance as something to be applied by the gallon jar. This is a well made play, reinforced with a double row of four inch nails.

But such is the quality of the acting that much, though by no means everything, is forgiven. Cornelius Melody is an Irishman and a father, and like most O'Neill characters with such handicaps, an outsize parody of every available Irish and paternal defect. An affector of aristocratic manners, regularly drunk, in debt, and married to the assembly of all the Saints in her peasant kindness and innocence, Con is a failed tavern-keeper, whose self-respect only survives with his memories of gallant service in the Peninsula War (notably at Talavera, whose anniversary he keeps). He is caught between the humble, submissive, peasant nature of Nora, who reminds him of his roots, and the decent ambitions of Sara, his half-Americanised daughter. He strikes attitudes and keeps sponging retainers at the expense of profit in order to play the gentleman, but keeps his fellow immigrants at arms length because they are "scum".

The unhappiness of Sara and Nora might be overcome by the girl's requited love for the son of the Hartfords, a wealthy local family (an idealised young Romantic, who might have amused Lenz, but who is blessedly kept off-stage). It is brought home to Con, on the anniversary of Talavera, that the elder Hartford regards him as low company to be bribed out of the district at any cost. A brawl perceived as gallant vengeance ends in concussion and self-realisation. Con shoots the mare which is his true delight and last link to gentry status—and lapses into the brogue. The women, who have suffered from his aristocratic contempt, see him renounce pride, opt for the Irish midden and, as they might, they weep.

It is a piece of heavy intent and longer than heavenly length. This is not Schubert but grinding sub-Mahler. The devices of O'Neill's stage craftiness stick out like flying buttresses. Con strikes an heroic attitude before a mirror, in and out of uniform half a dozen times, and quotes Byron, his favourite poet, about being above the throng. When Sara angrily hopes that one day he will look into the mirror and see the truth, we know that he will an act and a half later. The mare is like a gun over the mantlepiece, so flourished that

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her emblematic destruction is an undramatic certainty. And everything is underlined and repeated until dull old us in the auditorium have had the facts hammered into our heads.

O'Neill's way is to write like an exorcist against his own self, family and tribe. His notion of Irish weaknesses—pride, vanity, peasant-hating peasanthood, drink, flamboyance, parasitism, and memory—is quite deadly. Only an Irishman could write about the Irish with such loathing. There is no contempt like self-contempt, and rarely is O'Neill not denouncing an aspect of himself or his kin. The self-lacerating perception is harrowing and the emotions portrayed are quite strong enough to withstand the heavy mahogany of O'Neill's stage carpentry. It is quite possible to take O'Neill apart; not at all reasonable to deny him his morose grandeur.

As for the acting, what can one say? There is a string of fine performances. The subtle eccentricity of Mrs Hartford is brilliantly done by Amanda Boxer in the piece's comic American intermezzo, the old soldier Jamie (John McEnery) has perfect sardonic credibility, and a string of dreadful tap-room cronies are impressively done by James Berwick, Simon Coady and Shay Gorman. Rudi Davies, as Sara, projects the most complex of characters, level headed and romantic, ambitious but honourable, young and tinged with bitter experience, Irish and American. Her accent directly assaults this gap; it is Irish at base, but a Yankee twang comes through. It is a most ambitious and successful attempt at a voice which underlines the nature of Sara herself.

Timothy Dalton (as Con) is stuck with a part which *must* be over-acted. O'Neill has made demands of deliberate unsubtelty with a role in which James Tyrone or James O'Neill would have delighted. One must thus act badly and do it very well. Timothy Dalton, with swagger bravado, remorse, Byronic sneer and cringing brogue, does all and more than he was asked. But the performance of the night is that of Vanessa Redgrave. Again it is enforced over-acting. She is heaped with all the attributed virtues of the Queen of Heaven and a delight, bred in the blood, of any brawl which injures policemen. Miss Redgrave entraps sympathy with her tenderness, and has a gift for sweetness, which quite out-runs the part. It is simply the very highest sort of personality acting.

THE GRUESOME office-like premises of the Royalty, designed surely by a committee of accountants and anti-social architects, is host to Rattigan's double bill, with *Harlequinade* played first. One feared vehicle-acting in this account of touring with the Bard in West Bromwich. But far from that, Dorothy Tutin handles her middle-aged Juliet/Edna with loving coquetry, sending up old-fashioned business and having the time of her life on the balcony. Paul Eddington is beautifully distracted and Jean Anderson does the old-style theatrical dame, in what I take to be loving memory of Athene Seyler. The real life dames these days are getting younger all the time.

In *The Browning Version*, Daniel Beales is a neat, uncontrived Taplow, adjusted to the way boys are taught to speak now rather than the sort of boy-squeak one associates with public-schoolboys on stage. But, again, Mr Eddington holds everything together. It is a revelation, as perhaps it should not have been, to recognise the depths and dimensions of an actor identified with a series of charming screen character kits. Crocker-Harris, the man of sensibility, marginalised by forward-looking Heads and a rutting wife, is played with half an eye to the externalities of Enoch Powell—in the hair style and the military sensibilities of the voice. He is also frozen cold with unhappiness. The quality of tragedy in what befalls this man I have never seen so clearly before. It is a quite fabulous piece of acting. To say this is not to take anything away from Dorothy Tutin as Millie, bitchy and venomous, and obliged to handle with delicate skill, a part to which the Tutin charm is not admissible.

In fact, the double bill makes a splendid evening. Rattigan has stood up far better than might have been supposed; and even allowing for the risks of towering ambition, how well he compares with windy, over-written, portentous O'Neill. There is something to be said for English understatement after all. Terse Terence could have encompassed the plot of *A Touch of the Poet* in two hours dead; O'Neill takes three-and-a-half to be quite sure he has killed it.

EXIT ENTRANCE by Aidan C. Matthews (at the Donmar and from the Abbey, Dublin), has shocked some critics by its compassion and gentleness. It is vulnerable, certainly, on counts of whimsy. There is a scene involving young lovers talking to each other through puppets, which either echoes or forgets about the similarly embarrassing passage between Jimmy and Alison Porter in *Look Back in Anger*. But this little diptych, showing first an elderly couple preparing for the clinical suicide of grieving age, and secondly, a young couple delighting in their love for one another, I found affecting and honest.

The unstated implication is old fashioned, Irish and Catholic, and none the worse for that. The suicide comes to look like the selfish act of a man (his cancer, their death), which he makes sure of by barring the telephone calls (of their son) to his only three-quarters resigned but devoted wife. Politically this will cause what used to be called internal contradictions. The rejection of rational death is clearly reactionary, the sympathy with the oppressed wife positive and progressive. In fact, apart from a froth of praxisbabble from a "Senior Lecturer in English" in the programme note (and how intolerable programmes grow these days), I suspect Mr Matthews of having an old-fashioned simplicity of outlook.

He is sorry for the wife because her querulous husband wants death for both in order to cure his ills. The youngsters, who parallel them all the way (themselves 35 years back or *doppelgänger* neighbours), are endearing, pretty much because they are. Unselfishness has settled on them like dew. The piece, despite programme notes, is almost an exercise in dramatic counterpoint, some of it a little heavy-handed. But there are four impressive performances, with that of Joan O'Hara quite taking the evening. Despite critical coolness, there is commercial potential in this deft piece of *tristesse*.

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LETTERS

Stradivari's Secret

ONE MAY WONDER why Anne-Sophie Mutter, skilled technician that she is, and hard-headed practical student of performance which she reveals herself to be in your article (ENCOUNTER, May), turns mystical when she is alone with her Stradivarius.

Science, we know, cannot solve everything; and surely all of J.B. Rhine's experiments with "extra-sensory perception" will not adequately explain Ms Mutter's rapport with the sounds of her violin. But recently Cambridge University happened to get hold of a fragment of a 1711 Stradivarius cello. And they decided they would test the theory that Stradivari (and other 18th-century violin-makers from Cremona) used a "thin layer of cement made from lime and a volcanic ash called *pozzolana*". Presumably it would give the maple wood a hard, durable surface.

A RECENT ISSUE of *Nature* reports their findings. The examination was done under a scanning electron microscope, taking particular note of the X-rays it scattered off. Evidently, beneath the varnish is a layer of dense, tiny particles one-five-hundredth-of-an-inch thick. In case your readers may still be interested at this point, I quote the technical analysis further, even at the risk of—as in the analogy of the centipede thinking about which foot to move first—paralysing Anne-Sophie Mutter's fingerwork.

> "The X-ray patterns [reports Nicholas Schoon in *The Independent*] showed it was made only of *pozzolana*; no lime had been used. The ash was probably made into paste with water and egg white, then applied. Although it might not be as hard as cement, the scientists suggest the ashen layer may be at least part of the secret of the instrument's sound. . . ."

The final scientific conclusion which Anne-Sophie Mutter can ponder, between concerts of Beethoven and Lutoslawski, is that "the exquisite tone and extraordinary longevity of Stradivarius violins may be due to a thin layer of volcanic ash pasted on them before varnishing." As Cole Porter of *Kiss Me Kate* audacity might have put it—and there was lots of ash in Cremona.

SIDNEY LASH

Cambridge

Distinctions

AMIDST SO MUCH uncommon sense about "The Lingering Debate on Capital Punishment" in the March ENCOUNTER, there still remains one unfortunate lapse. Rightly, E. J. Mishan insists "that although the individual is subject to influences and constraints, his behaviour is never the outcome wholly of forces beyond his control. . . ." Individual choice is to be treated as a reality, not an illusion.

But this insistence, sound as it is, is flat inconsistent with any retention of the assumption that, in a necessitarian sense, all behaviour is determined, if not by heredity, then necessarily by the environment. That Mishan has not yet freed himself from this assumption becomes clear when he argues that "until such time . . . as there is a consensus that crime is to be attributed . . . to innate and irremediable biological propensities, we are bound to put the emphasis on environmental factors".

To escape this dilemma we need to distinguish two fundamentally different senses of "cause". In one—call it the physical—the causes of all events other than human actions do inevitably bring about, and thus necessitate their effects. In the other—call it, following Hume and others, the moral—the causes of human actions *incline* but do not *necessitate*. Suppose that I, bearing splendid news, give you cause to celebrate. Then, though I may make it likely, indeed reasonably certain, that in fact you will, I do not thereby inexorably *necessitate* the willy-nilly making of whoopee.

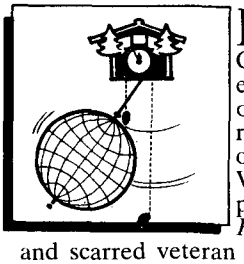
This obvious and, once it is clearly and firmly made, altogether familiar and undeniable distinction is crucial to any understanding of the findings of the social sciences. Nevertheless, I know of no elementary work in the philosophy of the social sciences—other than my own *Thinking About Social Thinking* (Blackwell, 1985)—which makes it, insisting that it is and must be crucial in distinguishing the human from the natural sciences.

ANTHONY FLEW

Reading

The Prospects of Change: Fantasy or Ambiguity?

Lasky's "Cycles"—By NATHAN GLICK



READING Melvin J. Lasky's "The Cycles of Western Fantasy" (ENCOUNTER, February), I thought of the reply by William Phillips, perennial editor of *Partisan Review* and scarred veteran of ancient battles against Stalinism, to Kenneth Tynan's defence of the pro-Soviet Left in the 1960s: "I know the answer to that, but I've forgotten it!" Lasky's impressive tour of gullible journalistic responses to Soviet behaviour over seven decades provides a useful reminder of the answers one hoped would never have to be recalled.

But his article goes beyond the issue of gullibility to raise more fundamental questions about the future course of Soviet polity and policy. Although he concedes the inevitability of change, he seems to be saying that, barring an unprecedented revolutionary upheaval, no imaginable administrative changes can alter the totalitarian character of the Soviet Union. While Stalin was in power, this proposition seemed undeniable to those of us who, like Lasky, were raised on the formidable Kremlinology of Nicolaevsky, Borkenau, and Souvarine. Yet neither these intrepid analysts nor their disciples predicted Khrushchev's historic speech of 1956 or its consequences: among them, millions released from camps and prisons and the temporary eruption of bitter honesty in literature and the arts. Our original concept of totalitarianism—formulated in the 1950s by Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski in *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*—was founded on Stalinist terror. This included not only an omnipotent leader but the brutal intrusion of the state into the once-immune precincts of family and church, and therefore the destruction of those small autonomous communities that sustain dissidents and heretics even in traditionally authoritarian societies.

As Walter Laqueur points out in his recently revised *The Fate of the Revolution*—which includes a typically acute and balanced discussion of the subject—even Arendt, Friedrich, and Brzezinski modified their views during the Khrushchev era, while so knowledgeable an observer as Richard Lowenthal proposed the alternative term "post-totalitarian authoritarianism". (Others spoke of "failed totalitarianism".) Laqueur ends up with a more modest three-part definition of totalitarianism, as distinguished from authoritarianism: (*1*) the centrality of ideology, (*2*) the absence of even limited political pluralism, and (*3*) the insistence on mass political participation directed from above. He leaves open

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the issue of irreversibility, which is really at the heart of Lasky's implicit argument.

MY FIRST PROBLEM with Lasky's thesis is tactical. His polemic on gullibility should be directed not against the most vulnerable of adversaries, but against the most respected and best-informed. Among those willing to entertain the notion that Gorbachov may initiate really significant changes both in domestic and foreign policy, we find scholarly American "revisionists" in Sovietology like Stephen F. Cohen of Princeton and Jerry Hough of Duke University, alongside such ENCOUNTER contributors as Jeane Kirkpatrick and Richard Pipes.

In a recent column in the *Washington Post* (15 February 1988), Mrs Kirkpatrick contemplated the implications of the rehabilitation of Bukharin, advocate in the 1920s of the relaxed "New Economic Policy" against Stalin's breakneck industrialisation and of the Kulak's private farm against forced collectivisation.

> "All of this revisionism in Lenin's name may presage a broad evolution toward less reliance on force in internal and external affairs—if Gorbachov lasts. And he just may."

I have heard Richard Pipes concede the same possibility in the course of an informal debate with Professor Stephen Cohen. Even in the remarks Lasky cites, Pipes properly dismisses Gorbachov's book *Perestroika* as "a hash of boring and unbelievable clichés"—but precisely because it was unworthy of "a genuinely innovative undertaking. . . *Perestroika* deserves better."

LET ME SUGGEST at least two historical arguments that can be adduced for the possibility of substantial change, not only toward a more rational economic policy but also toward a more permissive and humane cultural policy.

First, the Khrushchev precedent. Just as the various Republican administrations from Eisenhower to Reagan have not reversed Roosevelt's New Deal reforms, neither did the Brezhnev era, for all its stagnant tendencies, reinstitute Stalin's domestic terror (although it came symbolically close in its treatment of Sakharov). Part of Khrushchev's failure to sustain his power and direction can be traced to personal qualities of boorishness and arrogance, as well as to ill-fated international adventures (Cuba, in particular) and agricultural programmes. Gorbachov is personally more subtle, dignified and flexible; and he seems more shrewdly aware of the need to build up a solid constituency before launching drastic new policies. (On the other hand, Khrushchev could bank on the initial support of the bureaucracy, since they were in the greatest danger of prison or death in the Stalin years; whereas Gorbachov has to win the support of comparatively secure and complacent *apparatchiks*.)

The second argument is contained in Stephen Cohen's stimulating biography of Nikolai Bukharin, which suggests that, had Stalin lost the factional battle, Soviet society could have taken a different, more moderate, less autocratic path. A number of younger US scholars in the field of Soviet history have documented supportive evidence for this view. And even the older generation of Sovietologists has not reached a consensus on how much of Soviet expansionism is ideologically motored, how much Czarist imperial, how much simply imperial, and how much real fear of hostile neighbours (whether justified or not). We certainly could not have predicted, on the basis of purely ideological analysis, the sharp split between Communist China and the Soviet Union.

Should we not re-examine the old assumption that an irresistible impulse to expand is built into the very nature of any communist régime? It doesn't seem to energetically animate the leadership of Mainland China. How much influence does "Marxist-Leninism" really have when (as Leszek Kolakowski, Irving Kristol, and others have pointed out), it is largely a rote phrase in Communist countries and taken seriously mainly by some Western academics and politicians?

THOSE WHO BELIEVE that fundamental change cannot occur in the Soviet Union except through violent revolution (or defeat in war) have not, to my knowledge, examined the consequences of their view. Do they advocate a policy of supporting with arms "freedom fighters" inside and outside the Soviet Union? And let us suppose that the CPSU is overthrown in a bloody and protracted civil war, would the successor régime more likely be democratic in the Western tradition, or nationalistic, pan-Slavic and religiously orthodox? If the latter, would it necessarily be less of a military or imperial threat?

I support Melvin Lasky's timely warning against euphoria or gullibility. But nothing in our study of history assures us that we know all of its secrets or possibilities. The role of personality, particularly the character of leaders, is not inconsequential, as Sidney Hook argued persuasively in *The Hero in History*. I suggest only that, without forgetting the lessons of the past, we leave our minds open to new evidence. History, in its cunning, may even hold some agreeable surprises.

NATHAN GLICK

Arlington
Virginia

Forty Years On

WHAT COULD match behind "the iron Curtain" (as we used to say) your "cycles of Western fantasy"? Perhaps the "cycles of Eastern pseudo-realism"?

Gorbachov's visit to Yugoslavia was a useful reminder that, despite their many other preoccupations at home and abroad, the Russians have not abandoned all hope of drawing that country back into the Soviet fold. But they will not find it easy. The peoples of Yugoslavia have had more than their fair share of reforms and "reconstructions" of the Titoist version of Communism, and are not greatly impressed by talk of *glasnost* or *perestroika*. Through all the ups and downs of the 40 years that have passed since Yugoslavia escaped from Soviet control, the country has continued to be ruled by a single party backed by an all-pervasive and relatively efficient secret police. Though Titoism gave the Yugoslav population a greater measure of freedom than other Communist countries have been permitted, any move in the direction of real nitty-gritty democracy has been frustrated.

Gorbachov was careful not to commit himself in praise of Yugoslavia's "human face" socialism. He knows very well that one of its achievements is an inflation rate of well over 100% and an enormous foreign debt. At a time when the West is not greatly concerned about Yugoslavia or the régime it did so much to bring into being, the temptation for the Russians to extend their economic grip on Yugoslavia is considerable. That is why, in my view, everything possible should be done to encourage those in Yugoslavia who want to see their country develop peacefully in the direction of greater democracy and freedom.

NO SINGLE PUBLICATION in the West has done more to promote democratic reform in Yugoslavia than *Naša reč* (Our Word), which was founded just 40 years ago in Paris but has been edited for most of its long life in London. Now, for financial reasons, it is forced to return to Paris. Its survival is to a large extent a tribute to the untiring efforts of Desimir Tošić, who is now seeking the cooperation of younger people to carry on the good work.

Naša Reč has the distinction of circulating both inside Yugoslavia and among the Yugoslav émigré communities in Europe and America. It counts among its contributors not only members of the *Oslobodjenie* (Liberation) movement but also well-known critics of the régime inside Yugoslavia, of whom Milovan Djilas is the most prominent.

Naša Reč has always campaigned for evolution and not revolution.

"Our aim has always been to con-

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vince public opinion on both sides of the Yugoslav frontier, both in the country and outside it, that the only rational way out of a one-party system that came to power through civil war and with the advantage of support from foreign powers, is through democratic evolution, through gradual but systematic transformation. . . ."

It would be very sad if, when similar views are being voiced openly in Yugoslavia and when there are signs that the country is moving towards greater democracy and the end of the one-party system, *Naša Reč* were to be forced to close down for lack of funds.

The *Financial Times* celebrated its 100th birthday recently, and ENCOUNTER published its 400th issue. It is arguable that for *Naša Reč* to survive for 40 years, on a shoe-string and with no outside support whatsoever apart from an occasional gift from a well-wisher, is no less an achievement. Anyone who wishes to help to keep *Naša Reč* going may write to the Editor, 53 Hawthorn Drive, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 7NU.

DAVID FLOYD

London

What Intellectual Debate?

THE FINAL paragraph of the "Letter from Holland" printed in ENCOUNTER ("Faults of the Dutch", January 1988) is characteristic of the peculiar, rather narrow perspective adopted by its two authors. Reading this letter to discover what "faults" may be selected for vituperation, one finds that it mainly concerns "the debate" alluded to in the subtitle, which is presented as being an intellectual debate, and sometimes as an ideological one, between Revolution (progress) and Reaction. Now the complaint appears to be that, although the "Left" was "winning" this debate ("intellectual hegemony of the Left"), there is no answer, no counter-position ("no ideological dominance") proposed from the Right. We are given to understand that this unsatisfactory situation is "perhaps a telling comment on Dutch society. . . ."

The so-called debate seems to have ceased "*faute de combattants*". Or is the "adversary" in another place than where the Left is looking for him? Was the debate really between the intellectual concepts (or ideologies) of the Left and the Right? The two professors tell us that it was, and they draw their own conclusions. But did the so-called "Right" know and did it agree, or did it have something quite different in mind?

It is too easy to win an "intellectual" or any other "debate" as long as you can unilaterally decide what the substance of the debate is going to be. But that way you are getting only a "*dialogue des sourds*", that convinces nobody but oneself!

This glib report about the history of the present situation in Holland is not so much wrong, as very deficient. It stresses what the authors imagine they have perceived and think they are able to understand, but leaves out what they don't—a good example of an argument from the reductionist frame of reference the Left has accustomed us to. It is quite true that the Netherlands have had to struggle with many post-War problems; old and new, national and international. They have committed many faults. Would that these faults concerned mainly "the intellectual debate" we are told about. But they are much more important and irreparable than that. It seems "a telling comment" on the state, not so much of Dutch society than of its "intelligentsia", that this is made into the subject matter of your "Letter from Holland".

A. M. DONNER

Groningen

[The author, an emeritus professor of Law at the University of Groningen, is a former judge in the Court of Justice of the Communities (1958-1979) as well as in the European Court on Human Rights (1986-1988).]

Bell, Kristol, Epstein

IN HIS "Farewell to Utopia" (ENCOUNTER, April), Joseph Epstein coyly directs the reader to an article that had appeared in the Spring 1973 issue of *Dissent*, entitled "Intellectuals in Retreat", which taxed Irving Kristol and others for going "too far in the other direction". And, after an intellectual striptease, Epstein reveals ("Hey kids, it was only immaturity"), that he was the author of that essay at the "fairly young age" of 36.

That won't do. I do not believe that individuals who have made wrong political judgments must be shriven before they're accepted into the new faith; and besides, I am not of his faith, then or now. But I do believe that if one makes an apology, it ought to be straightforward and manly.

The title of the 1973 essay was "no accident", as was said in the radical movement. It was the direct repeat of an earlier essay by James Burnham and Max Shachtman in *The New International*, a Trotskyist journal, in 1938, attacking Max Eastman, Sidney Hook, and others for surrendering revolutionary Marxism. Mr Epstein, in his reprise, smugly called Irving Kristol "the Coué of American politics", by saying that every day in every way American society was getting better and better. In the current essay, he praises Kristol for the observation that "an adult's 'normal' political instinct should be conservative".

Perhaps. But if Mr Epstein is now an adult, has put away his childish things and sees through a glass more darkly, he ought to write like an adult as well.

DANIEL BELL

King's College
Cambridge

Kulchur

SOMEONE as erudite and meticulous as your columnist *M* ought to know better than repeat the familiar but erroneous attribution to the later Field-Marshal Goering of the expression "When I hear the word culture, I reach for my revolver. . . ." Brute as he doubtless was in other respects, Goering was a man of some cultural pretensions: a genuine music-lover, for instance, who even protected the Jewish conductor Leo Blech and also Wilhelm Furtwängler. (As to Goebbels, who is sometimes alternatively credited with the phrase, he was, of course, actually Minister of Culture. . . .)

I had always remembered the quotation coming from a rather mediocre play written in the early 1930s called *Schlageter* by Hanns Johst. This is confirmed by the following entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (new ed., 1979), p. 283:

> *"Wenn ich Kultur höre . . . entsichere ich meinen Browning!"*

Which is rather freely rendered as:

> "Whenever I hear the word 'culture' . . . I release the safety-catch on my pistol."

And which only needs, in an age of Kalashnikovs and Armalites, an extra footnote explaining that the German reference is to John Moses Browning, the (in his day) famed American inventor of automatic fire-arms. No relation to either of the cultural Brownings, famed English poets; nor to Rattigan's *Browning Version*. All of which seems to me to be relevant, since in 1934 Hanns Johst's crack might well have been heard as a kind of political pun ("*Calauer*") on Nazi *Braun* and lethal *Browning*.

I imagine that Tom Stoppard, in his next play, might well take it from there.

CAL MICHAELS

London

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Life & Letters Today

London

MY DEAREST HOLMES?: **Was Sherlock Holmes really in love with Dr Watson? More to the point, was Dr Watson in love with Holmes?**

Ms Rohase Piercy has produced a somewhat predictable volume for the Gay Men's Press entitled *My Dearest Holmes* in which the famous pair of fuddy-duddies actually go to bed together.

Ms Piercy is actually not the first person to have hinted that Holmes (with his notorious love of street urchins and low dives) *may* have had a buried homosexual nature. For myself [A. N. Wilson writes], I think there is about as much plausibility in the theory as the idea that Chesterton's Father Brown was the first of the Gay Vicars.

Even now, Ms Piercy is perhaps concocting a "Gay Pickwick Papers" in which Mr Pickwick finally comes out of the closet and declares his passion for Sam Weller. As for Jeeves and Wooster they can at last be allowed to admit why the "gentleman's gentleman" (need one say more?) cared so passionately about his master's choice of socks and ties.

And anyone who sees how essentially erotic it can be to throw a custard pie at your friend will at once understand what Hardy felt about Laurel. Viewed in the right way, Laurel and Hardy could be seen as romantic as Antony and Cleopatra.

DAILY MAIL

Jordan

STRIKING OUT: *Wherever he went in the Middle East this week, Secretary of State George P. Shultz was dogged by the same nagging questions. "Why", everyone seemed to ask, "are you doing this?"*

Mr Shultz also had trouble getting his point across, particularly when resorting to homegrown aphorisms. In Israel, when he quoted a saying by Yogi Berra (the former New York Yankees catcher) as a negotiating strategy, one of the Israeli editors he was speaking with informed him matter-of-factly that "They don't play baseball in the Middle East."

NEW YORK TIMES

Paris

BOVARISM: **When M. François Léotard, France's Minister of Culture, was asked what his "bedside reading" was, he replied "Flaubert's Diaries". Since Flaubert didn't write diaries and there is no such work [Olivier Todd reports], it is proving something of a cultural embarrassment to the French government.**

BBC

Tokyo

OF CABBAGES & ALIENS: *Japan, often accused of xenophobia and sometimes with justification, took a small step this week to make visitors from abroad feel a bit less alien.*

Justice Minister Yukio Hayashida announced that he wanted to change the signs that direct foreigners to immigration counters at Tokyo's main international airport in Narita. The signs say **"Aliens".** *Perhaps, Mr Hayashida said, it would be better to use a new term, such as* **"Non-Japanese",** *or* **"Other Passports",** *or something else considered less irritating to those from overseas.*

It is a different story with other foreigners, notably Koreans, who form by far the largest group of non-Japanese living in Japan. They had the point reinforced this week.

The Japanese Supreme Court ruled on Tuesday that it was not their right to insist that television announcers pronounce their names as they wish. It was permissible, the Court said, for them to read names according to their Japanese pronunciation.

The name issue has long been a sore point for Korean residents. Both they and Japanese write their names with ideographs borrowed from Chinese. Japanese tend to insist on using their own pronunciations at all times. For example, Chun Doo Hwan, the South Korean president, is routinely called "Zen Tokan" here.

To many Koreans, this practice is roughly equivalent to an American insisting on calling the West German chancellor Mr Cabbage because that is what Helmut Kohl's last name means in English.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

El Alamein

CAPTION, CAPTIOUS: **Long ago, in the heady aftermath of President Nasser's friendship with Montgomery, it was called the El Alamein Military Museum—with crude papier mâché replicas of Rommel and third-rate oil paintings of Churchill telling the House of Commons of Montogomery's victory. A faded Union Flag hangs in the foyer, the blue turning to grey, opposite a large Nazi banner—perhaps the only large-size swastika flag hanging at any such memorial in the world.**

It is a drab, mournful affair whose exhibits are captioned perfectly in Arabic, but so atrociously in English that a stranger might mistake it for a school exhibition.

Montgomery is spelled "Montegomery", a Sherman tank is called a "Chairman", Auchinleck becomes "Ocknolik", de Gaulle "degoul", and Wavell "Weevel".

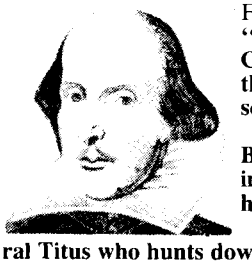
THE TIMES

London

IN A NAME: *Having spent a lot of my life [Richard Ingrams writes] trying to think up funny names for fictitious people, it is always rather frustrating when real-life characters turn up with much better ones. How can you improve for example, on* **Mandy Mudd** *for the mountainous London militant and former topless kissogram lady? Or, if you needed a name for a bearded American gay from San Francisco who has just published a book blaming President Reagan for the spread of AIDS, could one do better than* **Randy Shilts?**

THE OBSERVER

Newcastle



FIRST-AID: **A play described as "Shakespeare meets the Texas Chainsaw Massacre" certainly had the audience rolling in the aisles—some of them were unconscious.**

Four people passed out when the Bard's "Titus Andronicus" opened in Newcastle, and now the theatre has drafted in extra first-aid staff.

The play tells of the Roman general Titus who hunts down the men who raped his daughter and features disembowelling, mutilation, and cannibalism.

One spectator at the People's Theatre said: "It's great entertainment."

However, the Royal Shakespeare Company, which is staging the version, said it was "very restrained", although on one night at Stratford eight people passed out.

DAILY MAIL

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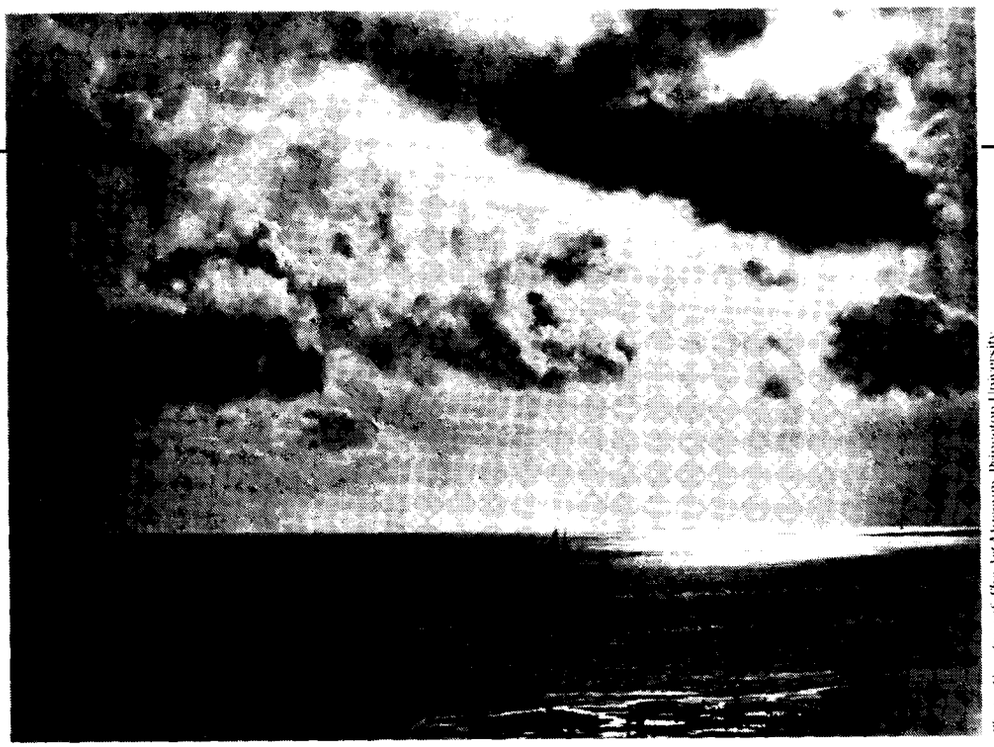

Photo Courtesy of the Art Museum, Princeton University

"Le Gray took a scientific tool and proved it capable of expressing the poignant romantic feelings of the epoch—the search for asylum in France's ancient forests, the mystique of military pomp and glamour, the longing to steer a maritime course along luminous horizons."

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF GUSTAVE LE GRAY

Eugenia Parry Janis

In this sensitively written and handsomely illustrated book, Eugenia Parry Janis presents the first full-length appreciation of one of the most brilliant "painter-photographers" of mid-nineteenth-century France. A painter who studied under Paul Delaroche, Le Gray brought his painterly eye to the art of photography while experimenting with and mastering its techniques. His invention of a form of paper-negative photography was a major innovation.

Janis shows Le Gray as a teacher of many gifted French photographers and a significant influence on the early Impressionists. In sketching his eventful career, she reveals him as central to the exciting artistic life of Paris of the 1848 Revolution and Second Empire.

136 halftones 12" x 9½" *Copublished with The Art Institute of Chicago*

The book was first published on the occasion of an exhibit of Le Gray's work organized by the Art Institute of Chicago. The exhibit opened at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris on June 1, where it will remain through August.

The University of Chicago Press

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